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THE  
RIGHTS AND THE WRONGS  
OF THE  
POOR

IN A  
SERIES OF LETTERS:

ADDRESSED TO THE WORKING CLASSES OF ALL DENOMINATIONS

TO WHICH, ON THE SAME SUBJECT, ARE APPENDED

SIX LETTERS

TO THE

NOBLEMEN OF ENGLAND.

BY THOMAS BROTHERS.

AUTHOR OF

"THE UNITED STATES OF NORTH AMERICA AS THEY ARE, NOT AS  
THEY ARE GENERALLY DESCRIBED."

Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weight?

MICAH VI. 11.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.

W. REEVE, LEAMINGTON.

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## ERRATA.

- Page 15—12th line from the top, for “land” read “band”.  
 „ 19—21st line from the top, for “leathered” read “leather”.  
 „ 80— 9th line from the bottom, for “debts, taxes, and poor’s rates”,  
 “debt and taxes”.

# INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

---

MY FRIENDS,

Believing that, of all things, it is necessary for men to understand their rights; and, not only to be prepared to assert them when they are in jeopardy, but, to insist upon the restoration of them, or of an equivalent, when they have been taken away, and thinking that it is every man's duty to do what he can towards this important object, I take this liberty of soliciting your attention while I attempt to show you what those rights were, and how, in my time, they have been frittered away. The devastation, however, commenced before that time, and, by way of introduction, I will briefly relate a little information, on olden times, that I obtained, chiefly, from that excellent work of the late Mr. Cobbett's, entitled, "The History of the Protestant Reformation," which shows us that Catholicism was the first Christian religion, and that it was the only Christian Religion ever preached to our fore-fathers for the space of nine hundred years!!! At the end of which time there arose a ferocious monster, and, till this day, when we speak of the devil and wish to make him, if possible, worse than he is, we call him "*Old Harry*," meaning Henry the 8th, who, to indulge his worse than beastly lust, put down the Religion of our country, and established what is called the "Protestant Church," by means that I shall not pretend to go fully into, but shall merely say, that no wickedness that the mind of man can possibly imagine could exceed those means.

The immense property that had, at that time, been bequeathed by pious persons, to the amount it is said of twelve millions of pounds or more, to the Church, in trust, for the maintenance of the poor for ever, was confiscated. Previous to that the Priest, in Church property affairs, was but a steward, whose duty it was,



out of such funds, to relieve the poor and needy ; and, for such pious care, he was entitled to a maintenance, for himself only ; for he was not allowed to marry, lest he should have other cares. I know not how Catholics of the present day may have degenerated, but this I know, that, if they could be relied upon to be, what *they were* when their Religion was the only Religion of our country—their restoration would be the most happy circumstance that has been known to England for these last three hundred years. That they will be restored, not indeed to the plunder taken from them, that cannot be, but, in other respects, to something like their former condition, I have no manner of doubt : believing that this disorderly state of things is approaching fast to its end. The workings of the new poor law ; the swarms of bible expounders ; the strange freaks of the present “ Establishment,” together with the numerous other curses that have grown out of these things, have brought us to such a pass that to go much further forward, seems impossible. The “ Establishment ” itself is, evidently, aware of this and is, by degrees, lowering her tone with respect to the ancient Religion, and, perhaps, preparing for an abdication in its favour, when it shall become impossible for her to sustain herself any longer against the swarms of sects by which she is beset ; every one calling itself the only *true Church*, and fully expecting, sooner or later, to be at the top. The “ Establishment ” never can consent to make way for any of

“ These croaking sects and vermin that are sent  
This restless nation to torment.”

But will, in the last resource, prefer the old Catholic Church ; the Priests of which are *learned*, generally *pious* ; and, withal, possessing *great influence over the minds of millions* ; and would be the only power likely to stay the wild and wicked proceedings that have destroyed almost every thing that bears any resemblance to that which is right. The changing of Religion will be nothing to the Reformation Clergy. Their ancestors changed from Catholic to Protestant, and back again, three or four times, in a few

years ; and, so will these when it suits their purpose so to do. As to you, you would, I should think, with open arms, hail a Religion under which your fore-fathers were, for so many centuries, so exceedingly happy. Knowing nothing of the word pauper ; standing soldiers ; district workhouse ; or, rural police to watch them in and out of their houses, as if they had been a race of thieves ; nothing of loans, funds, banks, or bank-notes ; cheating contrivances, so subtle and deeply laid, that one would think, their like could have been engendered in no other place but hell itself.

To lend money at interest was contrary to the principles of the Catholic Religion, and was never tolerated by a law until the last year of the life of the vile Henry, when the first law establishing the interest of money was passed, at 10 per cent., per annum. " Indeed," says Mr. Cobbett, " no such thing was ever attempted to be justified until the savage Henry the 8th had cast off the supremacy of the Pope." " The Jews," said he, " did it, but then, Jews had no civil *rights*. They existed by mere sufferance. They could be shut up or banished, or even sold at the King's pleasure. They were regarded as a sort of monsters who professed to be the lineal descendants, and to hold the opinions of those who had murdered the SON of GOD and SAVIOUR of MAN." That you, I say, whose sufferings have so much increased by every *reformation* since your own recollection ; that you, instead of going any further into these abominable things, would choose rather to go back, and would hail the Catholic Religion with delight, cannot, I think, be doubted.

Mr. Cobbett, speaking of the Priors, Friars, Nunneries, Monasteries, Abbies, and so on, which were placed at short distances, all over England ; and, speaking more particularly of Surrey, the county in which he was born, says, " When I behold the devastation of that county, I am filled with indignation against the ruffian devastators. Surrey has very little of natural wealth in it. Its present comparative opulence is a creature of the fictitious system of funding ; yet this county was from one end of it

to the other ornamented and benefited by the establishments which grew out of the Catholic Church."

"It would have been a work of difficulty for a man to place himself, even in that poor heathy county, at six miles distance from a place where the door of hospitality was always open to the poor, to the aged, the orphan, the widow, and the stranger; can any man *now* place himself in that whole county within any number of miles of any such door? No! all is changed, and changed for the worse. There is no hospitality in England now, words have changed their meanings. We now give entertainment to those who entertain us in return, but, very seldom because they stand in need of it. An *hospital* in those days meant a place of free entertainment, not a place merely for the lame, the sick, and the blind; and the very sound of the words 'Old English hospitality' ought to raise a blush on every Protestant cheek."

And Bishop Tanner, a *Protestant Bishop*, has written much in the praise of the Catholic institutions; and, among other remarks, says, that "all the monasteries were in *effect great hospitals*, that they were most of them obliged to relieve *many poor people every day*. That they were likewise houses of *entertainment for almost all travellers*." "In short," said he, "their *hospitality was such* that in the friary of Norwich ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED QUARTERS OF MALT, and above EIGHT HUNDRED QUARTERS OF WHEAT, and all other things in proportion were generally spent every year."

Thus says the Protestant Bishop. And then we find, that, in the reign of Henry the 6th, Fortescue, who was Lord Chief Justice of England, for nearly 20 years, writing on the state of the poor, tells us, that, they then *drank no water*, unless at certain times upon a *religious score*, and by way of doing penance. That they were fed in *great abundance* with *all sorts of flesh, and fish*; that they were "*clothed throughout in good woollen*"; that their bedding and other furniture in their houses were of wool, and that in *great store*. They were well provided with all other sorts of

household goods, and necessary implements of husbandry. Every one according to his rank had *all things which conduce* to make life easy and happy."

Such then had been the right and condition of the poor up to the "reformation" when Harry, Cranmer, Knox, Hooper, Ridley, and their like, rebelled against the Catholic authority, and plundered the Church of all that had been left in her care for these excellent purposes. So far did they go into devastation and plunder as to break open the tomb of that pious and most christian man, Thomas A'Becket, and took from his coffin its ornaments of gold. All these things did they part among themselves to the amount of twelve millions of pounds sterling. This sacrilege being completed, and every vestige of the religion of our forefathers trampled in the earth, and in its place the "reformation" set up; they revelled in the spoil, till God, in his wrathful displeasure, destroyed most of them; but still the "reformation" went on; and, out of which, have grown several other "reformations," from time, to time; the last of which having taken place but a very few years since, and all of them have had a tendency more to grind and oppress you.

The first *reformation* did its work by wholesale: soon caused the face of the country for the first time to be covered with beggars; and soon goaded the people to outrage and rebellion. To appease whom, it was found absolutely necessary to secure to them *a living* out of the whole of the land; instead of out of that, that had before *been theirs*; but which, having been so cut up and divided, could not, well, be restored. Hence came the POOR LAW, which, in some degree, satisfied the poor; and that law remained unaltered from that time, till within these fifty last years!! When the REFORMERS began chipping it away, and so successful has been their undertaking that, *the good old law*; that law that the bold and resolute men of those days *forced* from their tyrants; that law that enacted that every Englishman should have *a right to a good living out of the land of his birth when unable to obtain*

*one by other means*, is now no more!!! And, in its place we find monstrous gaols, which are called district workhouses, for the punishment of those who prefer to go into them rather than to live upon berries from the hedges, or to lay down and die in the roads; for, they are not, in fact, allowed to touch a single thing that God, our father, has sent for the use of his children.

Having said thus much, by way of introduction, to my other letters, I recommend you, as a matter that greatly concerns yourselves to get Mr. Cobbett's book. I know that to buy bread alone requires more money than many of you can obtain. I know, further, that, but few of you, have any taste for reading, nor do I wish you to become readers, *but rather thinkers*, and, especially do I wish you not to become readers of newspapers, which, for the most part, have ever been made use of to deceive you, and, are almost wholly in the hands of the usurers. But this clear and easily understood "*History of the Protestant Reformation*," I promise shall be as meat and drink to you, if generally read, among you. Get it then, club your penny each and let one who can read the best read it to the rest, by which you will learn that Saint Austin was a Catholic: so also was Alfred the Great, William of Wickham, Thomas a Becket, and all those great and good men whose names, without knowing that they were Catholics, we still revere, Three hundred years of the devastator's acts, cannot deface their Christian deeds. You will there learn, that our two universities, the wonder of the world, were instituted and built by Catholics, and that all of our ancient Churches and Cathedrals were the works of their hands. So, also, were the hospitable castles, that the wayfaring man never approached without having his heart made glad, and the ruins of so many of which castles yet remain to testify against their merciless destroyers.

In my next I shall commence my task, which I hope faithfully and justly to complete. And, for my pains, I know that I shall, as I always have done, suffer persecution in various ways for having taken your part. I shall be told, as I often have been told

that you are a worthless set, that you bring upon yourselves a great deal of your misery ; and, I shall be obliged to allow, being determined to flatter none, that this is, to some extent, the case. But then, I shall tell them, that without the advantage of education and polite society, with which they tell us they are so wonderfully blessed, without this, you would have been more than mortal if you could have withstood the many evil examples that they, themselves, every day set forth. If you could have lived among the monstrous wickedness by which, on every side you are surrounded ; if you could have done this, and have remained as honest, as sensible, and as just, as your fathers were, you would, as I now believe, have done more than human nature is capable of doing.

January 27, 1842.

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## LETTER II.

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“ Ah, happy Isle, how art thou chang’d and curst,  
Since I was born, and knew thee first.”

MY FRIENDS,—I have promised to give you an account of the manner in which you have been deprived of those comforts that, in my own time, I knew you to enjoy. This deprivation has, in my judgment, been carried into effect by a new *contrivance*, that will, if suffered to go on, uproot the last that is good of old English customs.

It is that of the making of bits of paper pass for money, and lending them to the people, on interest. If you read your Bibles you will find how impossible it is for a people to be happy whose earnings are made tributary to usurers ; though of the old fashioned kind, who lent gold, live stock, seeds, implements, and other valuable things ; yet, the Almighty denounced *them* in the following dreadful language :

“ Thou hast,” says he, “ taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbour by extortion. Therefore,

as they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it. So will I gather *you* in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave *you there* and melt you. \* \* \* \* \* Yes, I will gather you and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof." (See Ezekiel 22nd chapter.)

Were texts like these as often taken by our spiritual teachers as are those that may be so construed as, to appear, to justify themselves, and others, in living a life of ease at the expense of the labouring classes; were this the case, there would be some reason for us to believe their profession of love towards us. But, instead of this, we hear them everlastingly preaching about "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." They tell us that Christ made use of these expressions when asked by the hypocrites whether it was right to pay taxes. And they always give us to understand that the present ruler is, in this sense, a Cæsar. And that, indeed, they are all Cæsars together, who can successfully establish any scheme for a demand upon us. There is no man who desires to see their text more adhered to than I do; but, at the same time, I wish the Scriptures in other respects to be fulfilled. It is a very rare thing, now a days, to hear a parson take for his text any thing that is in favour of those who do the labour; although the Scripture abounds in such passages, which, if they had been fairly and continually expounded, would, doubtless, have prevented the miserable condition of too many of those, who, of all others, deserve a better fate.

For example, we find in the 13th chapt. of Romans, 7th verse, these words: "Render, therefore, to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."

Now, it shall be my business to show that the most important of these commands has, of late years, been altogether disregarded. And those who suffer from this neglect are forced, with whips and scorpions, to obey the rest. The command is this: "Render

custom to whom custom is due." And, before we go any further, let us see what "*rendering custom*" means. Barclay defines the word *custom* thus : "Among lawyers, it is a law or right not written, established by long usage, and consent of our ancestors."

To fulfil my engagement, then, I must call to mind what was the state and condition of the poor in the days of my youth. And as a sample of those things I cannot do better than take a single village, with which I have ever been acquainted. It is situated very near the middle of the Island, and, on that account, its *manners* and *customs* may, I presume, fairly be taken for those of the farming districts generally.

If there were, in those days, any poor in that village, they were those, only, that were superannuated ; and it was the delight of every one to assist them, and to do away with the hateful necessity of their applying for relief to the parish, which was a thing that was scarcely ever heard of.

Every labourer kept his pig, his fowls, and some of them kept a cow each. The shepherds were allowed the run of a sheep or two among their master's flocks. All of them brewed ale, and lived, upon the whole, in a comfortable manner.

The fields of that parish were enclosed ; a circumstance exceedingly unfavourable to the labouring men, and one that caused them to murmur a little when they compared their situation with those of unenclosed parishes.

It may not be amiss here to inform you what I mean by unenclosed fields ; for, I find that many who were born and brought up in districts of old enclosures, as well as many of those who have spent their days in cities, know nothing of this. When we speak of such a thing they think we are alluding to the thousands of acres of commons, always, till lately, considered the property of the poor ; or to the lands that have been bequeathed to the poor, or to the freemen of cities, boroughs, and towns ; nearly all of which, is now in the hands of the



robbers. The fact, however, that I wish to make you acquainted with, is this, that, until within a few years, comparatively speaking, the fields of England were never enclosed with any kind of fence whatever. And I believe that one-half of it was in that state when I came into the world. That a great number of the best parishes were so I well know, having spent the happiest days of my life in one of them while in that state ; and there are yet many unenclosed districts, though the happiness that I speak of has now departed from them, owing to a variety of causes or effects that have succeeded each other and that have been sufficient to make a waste of paradise itself. The enclosing, by acts of parliament, began in the reign of Anne, about a hundred and thirty or forty years back. An act was then passed for the enclosing of 1439 acres. Since then hundreds of acts have been passed for the sacrilegious purpose of enclosing and shutting out the poor men's stock, whose "custom," in that respect, had ever been "rendered" according to God's decree.

The open fields were divided into three lots : one for ploughing ; one for grazing ; and the other for mowing. Each of the farmers had, of the ploughed part, a land here and another there. Between these lands there was a turf balk, about a yard wide ; at each end of which, there was a stone placed ; this was called *the land mark*. Some times there was no balk ; and the stone was set at the end of the furrows that divided the lands ; in which case it was rather difficult when ploughing to be exact, and the covetous man, in endeavouring to take care of himself, would, with his last furrow, encroach upon his neighbour, and plough up the stone. In the replacing of which, he would move it *a little*, so as to square with the encroachment. And this God seems to have anticipated when he said, "*cursed be he who moves his neighbour's land mark.*" Then, again, adjoining lands being sown with the same kind of grain, and, each belonging to different persons, nothing but a strict sense of honesty in he *who reaped first*, could keep the sickle where it ought to be kept.

The moving of the land mark was considered a serious offence, and he, that, in public opinion, was once guilty of it, was never respected again. Doubtless you will think it a petty affair when you compare it with the various new, and deceptive, methods of *moving the mark*.

The pasture land was occupied in common: the farmers turned upon it cattle according to the number of acres that they rented or owned; and the labourers were, each of them, allowed to turn in, either a cow, or two or three sheep. This was so *customary* that it was considered the *law*. And, was it not a just and good law? The enclosing, however, shut out the poor man's stock; and, as in all other cases of infringement upon him, nothing adequate was given him in return.

The cattle were kept from the grain fields by herdsmen and their dogs. And the cows were all driven, for milking, into one pen in the field; where the maids assembled, not only from every farm house, but from every cottage. They carried their milking pails upon their heads, and, as they passed along, the vallies echoed back their blithsome songs. There seemed to be nothing of labour about it, but altogether a scene of pleasure.

The meadows were allotted out and the boundaries defined by the stone land mark. There was a set time for "clearing" them; after which, the cattle were turned in. What felicity could be equal to that of making the hay? Scarcely a soul to be found in the village that was not engaged in it. "Now," says the beautiful "Seasons,"

" Now swarms the village o'er the jovial mead :  
The rustic youth, brown with meridian toil,  
Healthful, and strong ; full as the summer rose  
Blown by prevailing suns, the ruddy maid,  
Half-naked, swelling on the sight, and all  
Her kindled graces burning o'er her cheek.  
Even stooping age is here ; and infant hands  
Trail the long rake, or, with the fragrant load  
O'er charg'd, amid the kind oppression roll.

Wide flies the tedded grain ; all in a row  
 Advancing broad, or wheeling round the field,  
 They spread their breathing harvest to the sun,  
 That throws refreshful round a rural smell ;  
 Or, as they rake the green appearing ground,  
 And drive the dusky wave along the mead,  
 The russet hay-cock rises thick behind,  
 In order gay. While heard from dale to dale,  
 Waking the breeze, resounds the blended voice  
 Of happy labour, love, and social glee."

The village, that I speak of was enclosed, but the lanes were left very spacious ; and, there were several greens from half an acre to an acre each. They, besides being so useful to a poor man's pig, or fowls, were the resting places for the travelling trader. The pot man ; the woodenware man ; tinker ; and so on. They were also the places allotted for the rural sports, and had been such, time out of mind. There, generation after generation had met, to enjoy the morris, bowls, quoits, and the innocent and healthful frolics, that made life *what it ought to be*, cheerful, blithsome, and happy. There stood the may-pole ; and there a May day sun never, till I was a youth, displayed its brilliance upon any other than a scene of mirth : mirth never to be understood by the victims of funding and banking. No ! I am without hope of effectually describing to you the pleasures of the dance and the song around the may-pole tree. Every limb and branch of which were covered with the daisies, lilies, lilacs, cowslips, oxslips, the thorns milk white blossom, and the endless variety of early flowers from the garden, the field, the hedge, and wood. Oh ! what would I give to see those *dark days* restored, and, again to hear the merry tabor and pipe come up the adjacent lane ; expected or not, *always welcome*, and the sure har-binger of jovial mirth. Though in the midst of harvest a cessation from labour was allowed, and "each lad and lass laid down their rakes and left off making hay." But, before we speak of harvest, let us call to mind the sheep-shearing ; which happened

when every department of nature's works were striving to excel in loveliness. The varied grain crops, in their full blown youth. The saintfoin, clover, peas, and, above all, the unassuming, but delicate and beauteous beans ; the fragrance of which, mingling in the passing gale, captivates the bee as she wings her way in search of the cloying treasure. No longer at fault, here she becomes enchanted and shapes her course for the luscious blossom ; upon which, she fastens her extracting tube, gathers, what she considers, the sweetest of the sweet ; and, who shall dispute such authority ? Here she ranges at will ; but, aware that her pleasures are fleeting, wisely suffers herself not to be surfeited with enjoyment ; knowing, or seeming to know, that such a course would be followed by tribulation and distress, she stores away, for a time, when forbidden for months together, on pain of death, to come out of her dormitory.

Here, too, the sky-lark, the most charming of warblers, is found. She poises herself above the beans as if peculiarly fond of their delicious fragrance ; which, she intercepts and inhales as it ascends to heaven, and, in gratitude, from morn till eve, she carols out her song, that ought to dispel, from the human breast, every feeling but that of love and adoration for the great God of nature ; whose wonderful beneficence would make England a Heaven, if it were not for the merciless talons of the extortionate usurers.

Speaking of these things ever puts me in mind of my arrival on this Island, after an absence of a few years. I had been rolling about for seventy days in a ship that had, part of that time, been without mast, yards, or sails : and, all hands expecting to be swallowed up by every billow ; but God, in his boundless mercy, finally drove us into the English channel. It was on the 3rd of June, at 2 o'clock A.M., when we were boarded by pilots who put me on shore. Those who love to see the rising sun, and to enjoy their native dews of a summers morning, will have some idea what I felt on that occasion. "As a bird

that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place." I wound my way up the chalky cliffs; oft looking back upon the blue sea, just made visible by the half-risen sun. At length, on the summit of the cliff, I could discern the ship, bearing away my companions, who had, with me, endured the many perils and dangers of that passage. There is something in these trials that makes even strangers dear to each other, and it was with much emotion that, for the last time, I looked upon them and turned my eyes upon other scenes.

The first was a field of grass, reserved for the scythe; the green ground work of which seemed to be intermingled with flowers of every hue. Close by, was a farm house and the crowing of a cock, the cackling of the geese, and other rural sounds, greeted my ear. I, presently, met the shepherd and his dog, going to see how fared the flock, after their night's repose. The cow boy was shouting and calling together his herd, to pay their contribution, in return for the care bestowed upon them, when all is buried beneath the snows. I now entered a field of beans, they were in full blossom; the larks were springing from them, and singing over them, in a manner that none can conceive unless they see and hear. Here I had a view of Dover Castle, between which, and myself, was an open fallow field. The whistling ploughman, and the teams, with their loose jingling traces, were coming to turn up the furrow, and expose to the scorching sun the obnoxious weeds. Presently I arrived at Dover, after spending three hours in walking over four miles of that charming country.

" Yes, England's a country whose face is delightful :  
 We ne'er see its equal wherever we roam :  
 Though the vile loan-mongers have made it so frightful  
 We ne'er can forget that it once was our home."

I could not forbear to notice, when speaking of the sheep-shearing, the beauties of the season in which it took place, and the above incident having made a deep impression on my mind,

and, happening just at that period of the year, presented itself to my recollection. It does, however, only in part describe the charms of an English June. I might give a passing notice of the garden flowers; of the laburnum; and all that please beneath its golden smiles. I might, too, speak of the blossom covered trees and hedges; of the wild rose, the primrose, "the freckled cowslip," "the lily fair in lovely pride," and of others, innumerable: all accompanied by music that no pen can describe. I might speak of the cuckoo's soothing note; of the melodious nightingale; the "sooty black-bird"; the "shrill tongued thrush"; the finches; the linnets; and all the rest, vieing with each other in song, and taking their stations in nature's great land. But, to do this, would be to veer away too much from my purpose, which is only to say enough to help the imagination to conceive the joys of the sheep-shearing: the morning's light of which, was ushered in by the "clamour of men, and boys, and dogs," penning the bleating sheep. In the general confusion some losing their young; and, with all the maternal affection of a Rachel, refusing to be comforted until re-united. But, why should I attempt to describe that, which is infinitely much better done, than it is in my power to do it? The far famed Thomson says,

" At last of snowy white, the gathered flocks  
Are in the wattled pens innumerable pressed,  
Head above head, and, ranged in lusty rows,  
The shepherds sit, and whet the sounding shears.  
The housewife waits to roll her fleecy store,  
With all her gay dressed maids attending round,  
One, chief in gracious dignity enthroned,  
Shines o'er the rest, the pastoral queen, and rays  
Her smiles sweet beaming, on her shepherd king;  
When the glad circle round them yield their souls  
To festive mirth, and wit that knows no gall.  
Mean time, their joyous task goes on a pace;  
Some mingling stir the melted tar, and some,  
Deep on the new shorn vagrant's heaving side,

To stamp his master's cypher ready stands ;  
 Others the unwilling wether drag along,  
 And glorying in his might, the sturdy boy  
 Holds by the twisted horns the indignant ram."

These were the scenes of my boy hood ; oft have I held the ram, dragged along the unwilling wether, and stamped the cypher on the heaving side. Oft, too, have I, anxiously, looked for the maid whom I knew would appear to crown the joyous festival. In the after part of the day the lasses from the neighbouring farms began to arrive, with their garlands of flowers, culled, and selected, according to their best taste, for the purpose of presenting to "the lads their hearts told them they loved."

The shearing over, the feast and the frolic commenced in earnest ; and the dance was kept up till day-light the following morning. "A SIMPLE scene, yet hence Britannia sees her solid grandeur rise."

What ! the stranger will ask ; and, are these things no more ? They are indeed no more !!! In their places we now behold the solitary labourer shearing the sheep, at wages, per head, that affords him nothing but *bread* ; or, a few cold potatoes, wrapped in a rag, which he, sitting down on a stone or a log, spreads on his knees, and thus eats his sheep-shearing dinner !! None come near to cheer his heart with the horn of "*old October*." No more the tabor and the thrilling pipe is heard. No more the gathered garlands scent the scene, and, the sweet smiling maids, with their cheeks of roses, where are they ? For, there, no more do their "bashful sidelong looks of love cheer the labouring swain." All monotonous now is that day, which, from time immemorial, was the gayest of the gay. *Never*, until of late years, has that day, been any other than a day of rejoicing. Read the 25th chapter, of the 1st Samuel, in which you will see how enwrathed David was with a rich Israelite, who would not suffer *ten young men* to partake of the sheep-shearing feast, *because they were strangers*.

*David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep, that day*, and he sent the young men ; bid them make use of his name, and assured them they would meet with a pleasant reception, because, *they came on a good day* ; meaning the sheep-shearing day. However this churl would not admit them, and snarlingly said, “ shall I take the bread and the *flesh* that I have killed for my shearers and give *it* unto men whom I know not whence they be ? ” So the young men went back to David, and told him all these sayings. Then David ordered his men to gird on their swords ; but, one of them went first to the churl’s wife, and told her to consider what was best to be done, “ for,” said he “ evil is determined against all your household.” And Abigail made haste, and, to make the matter up, took two hundred loaves ; and two bottles of wine, (you must here understand that bottles, in those days, were large skins sewed up, so as to hold liquid, and would contain each a barrel, or more). She took, also, five fat sheep ready dressed ; and five measures of parched corn ; one hundred clusters of raisins ; and two hundred cakes of figs. She sent them on asses, and told her servants to go on first, while she, to *avoid the sight of her husband*, went down by the *covert of the hills and met David there*. She begged he would not regard the sayings of her husband, whom, she admitted was a wicked and foolish man, and David was greatly pleased with the woman, and blessed God she had come, and kept him from *shedding of blood* ; for, if it had not been for her, he swore, by the Lord God of Israel, that, by the morning light, not one of the household of Nabal should have been spared.

Now, if it was just in David, the man after God’s own heart, to slay a whole household, because ten men, strangers to *Nabal*, were not allowed to come in and partake of the feast, what ought to be the punishment of those who will not suffer even the shearers themselves to partake thereof ? How ought the wicked to be punished who invented and carry on the craft that robs the poor man of his earnings and gives them to the idle and profligate ?



These men, wishing to take you away from the fact, will tell you that the great change, in your condition, is owing to "over population in the working classes." They will tell you this, while they are feasting by tens of thousands upon the spoil taken from you. By legerdemain they remove the good things from your tables and place them on their own. They dare not go to the farms and take the poultry, beef, bacon, and so on, by force, therefore, they have *devised* the deceitful balance; or, the bits of paper, with a few hieroglyphics, and about a dozen deceptive words engraved thereon, with which they drain, from the labourers, all that is good, without their knowing how it is done.

I have a friend, who lives on a farm, about one hundred miles from London. That farm produces twenty dozen pounds of butter, per week; which, with that of the rest of the farmers in the neighbourhood, is all sent to London. Scarce a pound left for the females that make it up, and, certainly, not a bit for the labourer's families. On a farm, like the one that I speak of, a drove of pigs are made pork every month; besides the sheep, and oxen, which are all sent to the ever craving London market. The same thing is going on from every part of England; and with respect to the sheep and cattle, from the remotest parts of Scotland and Ireland.

On my friend's farm, one labourer worked fifty years!! And then, at near 80 years of age, not being able to endure the thoughts of the oppression, that for the superannuated is now allotted, he, in hopes of bettering his condition, started to go to America! When, too feeble to weather the passage, he sunk beneath his sorrows, was thrown over board, and such was the end of a man who had scarcely lost a day from his toil for seventy years!! Never in bed after sun-rise; producing twenty times as much as he consumed, and yet, in the decline of his most useful life, reduced to the fare that I have spoken of. An hardship much greater to him than to those who were born after the comforts of the labouring man had departed.

It hurt me very much when I heard that his bones were washing in the ocean. But, on reflection, I considered it a consolation that he did not linger and die under the *new* poor law ; where, in a district workhouse, they separate husband from wife, and children from both ; and where his dead body might have been cut to pieces for the further benefit of his cruel oppressors. It hurt me, however, and *still hurts* me, when I think that *such a man*, at such a time of life, should have been frightened from his native and lovely village, the equal to which for nature's charms, I never met with in all my travels.

Poor old Daniel!!! how oft have I, among the wet grass, before the sun had removed the dew-drops from the bells of flowers, eagerly ran to meet him, as he came to the farm house to breakfast, after having been three hours at work ; clearing the thick set acres of the gold topped, prickly, furze bush : or, in other words, taking by storm the metropolis of the feathered creation : there they congregated, and seemed to agree that no place could be more adopted for a settlement, or more secure from wanton intruders ; but, against the formidable attack of the, newly sharpened, hook-bill, dexterously applied by the sinewed, and leathered shielded, arm of Daniel, all gave way, and down their little habitations came. It was for the spoil of which, that I so anxiously met the good old man ; who, amid the havoc and desolation he had made, sincerely felt for the affrighted and wild exclaiming inhabitants, that, frantic, winged above his head, as they viewed the general wreck. "Innocent little creatures," he would say, (or words to the same effect,) "I feel no pleasure in thus distracting you ; in thus laying waste your homes, and driving you from your beloved and helpless young. This is pain and grief to me ; but I am compelled to do it. The necessities of man require the foundation upon which you choosed to build, and, he who delights in destroying his own species, oft deluging the world in human blood for gain, cannot be expected, for a moment, to stay his arm, while he considers what dire alarm he brings to you."

Ah! little did he think, when thus he moralized, of the horrid system, then in embryo, destined to drive himself from his blazing hearth, where the "expectant wee things climbed his knees the envied kiss to share." Little did he think, that those children, were doomed to toil while strength endured to pay a *tax* to paper money makers, to be abject slaves to the accursed Jews and usurious Gentiles. And, when their sinews could no longer be strong, to be sent to a reform workhouse, made as terrible as the ingenuity of tyrants could make it, for the acknowledged purpose of frightening away from their native land those likely to become its inmates. Little did he think that he, himself, to avoid this cruelty, should be forced from children, country, and friends, to seek a resting place, for his worn out frame, in a land unknown to him, except in song or story. But, to be brief in my account of poor Daniel, I will merely state that his very oppressors, those who helped to deprive him of his rights, and left him not a ray of comfort to cheer his drooping heart, even they, have testified, that he was the noblest work of God. They gave him a premium for his honest, and faithful conduct, during a service of fifty years in one family!!! I believe it was two pounds. But, at this moment, I cannot lay my hands on the list containing an account of the distribution of premiums, of which his was one. I have, however, before me, other proceedings, of the same society, who thus honoured him. To wit, "The Warwickshire Agricultural Society." Holding their annual meeting, at Warwick, in 1833. Where they gave many rewards, in similar cases: one man had lived with a friend of mine for forty-two years, at that time, after which he continued to do so till his master died, and is yet on the same farm. A more just and upright man never drew the breath of life; and, this society, of lords and gentlemen, gave him as a token of reward, for that faithful service, one pound!! This is expected to make him satisfied with the great and unfavourable change in his circumstances: and, to encourage you all to be diligent. To be satisfied with the present fare, instead of the fare

that used to be met with in former days. One man worked on the same farm fifty-eight years !!! He had three pounds. Another fifty-seven years : he had two pounds. And so on. Then they gave to those shepherds who had reared the greatest number of lambs in proportion to the number of ewes. Here they tell us who it is that rears the good things. And why no longer let the rearers partake thereof ? Why not kill the lambs and sheep and eat them at home, as Nabal did ? And, indeed, as every age hath done, from then, till within the last forty or fifty years ? Why send the rearings, I again repeat, to be devoured by the idle gormandizing usurers of London ?

Women servants, too, I see in the list of premiums, one of whom diligently served one master and mistress forty-eight years !! and this kind, and, of all things, meliorating society, has rewarded them with two or three pounds each. The society is composed chiefly, of men who have to do with banking, or have money in the funds, which is the same thing as if they were to go, weekly, to Dolly, when she is making up the butter, and take of it what they want without money or price. Poor Dolly ! living on such a farm as I have noticed, making her twenty doz. lb. of butter every week, for forty-eight years !! must have gone to bed many thousands of times with aching wrists. What immense wealth in the course of that time, must have passed between Dolly's trenchers. And all forwarded to the banqueters of the great city, instead of being eaten by her, and you, who have lent your aid, in such a variety of ways, to produce it. It is wrong to curse, but it is good for the soul to confess our manifold sins and wickedness ; I, therefore, confess, that, when I have stood by the side of Dolly, and observed her packing the butter into her newly scrubbed wicker flats, first lined with shining wheat straw ; then with snow white cloth, then lump after lump, laid in the nicest order ; finally, the lid made fast, to be opened in London, and the contents there to be consumed by a brood that were never known to the world till lately, when I have witnessed this, and when I have

called to mind the sheep-shearing; the hay-making; the harvest month, the harvest-home, and the many other happy scenes of my youth, when I make myself assured that it was this brood that "removed the land-marks which our fathers had set," and deprived us of the "customs" that God commanded should be for ever "rendered" unto us; when I have done these things, I freely confess that I have cursed, and, most heartily cursed these extortioners. God has solemnly declared that he too, will curse them, yea that he will gather them in his anger, and in his fury and will melt them. The only wonder to us short-sighted mortals is, that the fire of his wrath is stayed so long.

It will, perhaps, be said, of the people of London, that they must always have been fed from the country. Fed! yes, but before the superlative curse was invented, there was not a tenth part so many of them, and, most of them were employed at some useful labour, the productions of which were exchanged for those of the country. The cutlery, and a great many other trades were carried on almost exclusively there. Most of the fine hats for the supply of the whole country, as well as for exportation, were made there. Now, I do not believe there is one thousandth part of what the Londoners themselves consume. Men are extensively engaged in that business, but the hats are nearly all manufactured in the country; and, so it is, with all other trades, except carvers and gilders; fine furniture makers; and others in which there is no use or necessity.

The venal newspaper press, whose very existence depends on dissipation, and, which is the ready handmaid of the plundering schemers in all countries, was the other day exulting over a tale, which it was sending round the world to the following effect. That the present population of London is two millions, twenty thousand of whom attend the theatres every night, except Sunday, all the year round.

That the number of theatres, and places of amusement, is ten times as great as it was fifty years back. And, that one, out of a

host, of gambling houses, affords a salary of a thousand pounds a year, to its chief cook. That the wine in the cellars of that house is valued at seventy thousand pounds. This press forgets not while boasting of the wonderful success of the players, and of the gamblers, to give us a short sketch of its own condition, from which we find, as might be expected, that it is not less flourishing than are either of the other corrupting departments.

And, as might be expected, the article winds up by stating too, that, the lower classes in this great metropolis are sunk in ignorance, poverty, and crime ; and that three million pounds sterling a year, are expended by them, on the article of gin alone.

These lower classes are those who do the menial labour for the bankers, loan-mongers, stock-jobbers, pensioners, play-houses, club houses, gambling houses, brothels, and, in short, for the voluptuous of every kind, that form such an immense mass ; and that eat up all the good things, to the amount of ten times as much as they formerly did. And besides the eatables, the country has now to find them in almost all other necessary and unnecessary things. “ Woe to him that establisheth a city by iniquity.”

February 24, 1842.

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## LETTER III.

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MY FRIENDS,—I am about to speak to you of the harvest month, and, the moment I mention it, the duties, and pleasures of that season, in those days crowd upon my recollection. Labour was, then, blended with enjoyment. Affection, and kindness, from the employer, and from the employed, towards each other existed, to such a degree, that the whole was one united family. Every human being on the farm, shared alike. All eat at the one everlasting table, covered with the best provisions that man ever tasted. And, would that words could convey to those who have not witnessed the exquisite delight, of being called by the sound

of the horn from the wide spreading elm, under which, upon the grass was spread the homespun cloth. There was the suet pudding, the beef, and the mutton, such as no country, but England, knoweth. And, the bacon, that, as poor Cobbett described, was as red as a cherry, and as transparent as glass. These things, with the appetite that ruddy health, and labour had given us, are not to be forgotten, while memory exists in the brains of those that have known them. Those, who, like the poor ragged Hibernian, have never known any thing better, may lay down their reaping hooks ; sit on the bank of a ditch ; and, perhaps, with some degree of satisfaction, wipe the sweat from their brows ; munch up their cold potatoes ; and wash them down with the water that flows at their feet. But we, who lived when " custom was rendered to whom custom was due," cannot be made satisfied with water, as a substitute for the nut brown ale : a draught of which from the gurgling wooden bottle, held up with both hands, to the mouth, would give renewed vigour to the body, and enable it to perform feats of strength, to which the puny race of total abstinence " Reformers," cannot even give credit.

If the group, under the elm, assembled from reaping, mowing, carrying, raking, and so on ; if these men and women, boys and girls, had been suddenly dispersed, and told that it was for ever, from their banquet beneath that green tree, and forced to mope lonely about, like the Irish, that now prowls over your fields, and who then had never been seen there ; If this reverse of circumstances, could have been an instantaneous affair, it could not have been endured. The tyrants that had done it would never have beheld another rising sun. No ! it has been brought on gradually and, I trust, I shall be able to shew you how, before we have done. But first let me attempt to describe to you one of the joyous " customs " of former days ; one of the three feasts, which God commanded should be kept to him in the year ; called " the feast of the in-gatherings, which is in the end of the year, when

thou hast gathered in thy labour out of the field." This commandment, we have reason to believe, has been annually obeyed, from the time it was given, till the coming of the age in which we live. Now, it is nearly all done away with. And the songs, sung on the occasion, are hardly to be obtained. It was a period that was looked forward to, with a glowing expectation, from the moment the scythe commenced the first swarth. These feelings increased, as the fields were cleared, till at length the happy day arrived. The last load was covered with green branches from the trees, among which rode those who had laboured to bring about the glorious conclusion. They, then, proceeded along, making the hills echo with shouts of joy; proclaiming, to all the neighbours round, that their harvest was home. That their task was performed. That they were making for the mansion, where the feast was preparing, and where the smiles of gratitude, from the worthy farmer and his wife, were waiting to receive them. Then was the long oak table profusely spread. And, the rich plumpudding, at times like these, the glory of the farmer's wife, was handed about, until there was not a little urchin of a boy who did not say that he had had enough. Then was broached the special barrel, that had, so faithfully, performed its trust, and had held secure, for the term of his imprisonment, the strong John Barley-corn. His sentence expired, the key turned and out he rushes more vigorous far than when he entered; and, sparkling with life, at the sight of his anxious friends, who, in haste to greet, round and round the board he went.

The cloth removed, all were impatient, as well they might be, to express their respectful gratitude to the founders of the feast. This, in one general chorus, was performed in the following verse:—

Here's a health unto our master the founder of the feast;  
Not only to our Master, but to our Misteress;



Wishing all things may prosper that ever they take in hand,  
 For we are all their servants, and all at their command.  
 So drink, boys, drink, and see as you do not spill;  
 For if you do, you shall drink two, and it is our master's will.

Then, in succession, the song, the glee, the joke, and the ale went round ; while some were dancing to the pipe and tabor : till, pleased at the sight, the sun peeped at them from behind the neighbouring hill. Then they departed, to talk, by times, of that night's mirth, until the season came round again ; of the feats of John Barley-corn, and of the folly of those who mocked at his powers, they having been the first, to fall under his mighty strength.

No firing of ricks ; no destroying of cattle ; no malicious proceedings, of any kind. But, each, sincerely wished all things might prosper that their masters took in hand.

This, my countrymen, is the way your fathers lived ; and is the way that all, who labour, have a right to live : for, it is labour that brings to the table every good thing. And, that you may the better understand this, I will here insert a few remarks of Locke's, a man greatly renowned for his judicious explanations of the rights of man. He says :

“ If we will rightly estimate things as they come to our use, and cast up the several expenses about them, what in them is purely owing to *nature*, and what to labour, we shall find, that, in most of them, ninety-nine hundredths are wholly to be put on the account of labour.”

“ To make this a little clearer,” said he, “ let us but trace some of the ordinary provisions of life through their several progresses before they come to our use, and see how much they receive of their *value from human industry*. Bread, wine, and cloth, are things of daily use, and great plenty ; yet notwithstanding, acorns, water, and leaves, or skins, must be our bread, drink, and clothing, did not *labour* furnish us with these more useful commodities : for whatever *bread* is more worth than

acorns, wine than water, and *cloth* or *silk* than leaves, skins or moss, that is wholly *owing to labour and industry* ; the one of these being the food and raiment which unassisted nature furnishes us with ; the other provisions which our industry and pains prepare for us."

"It is *labour* then which *puts the greatest part of value upon land*, without which it would scarcely be worth any thing : it is to that we owe the greatest part of all its useful products ; for all that the straw, bran, bread, of that acre of wheat, is more worth than the product of an acre of as good land, which lies waste, is all the effect of labour : for it is not barely the ploughman's pains, the reaper's and thrasher's toil, and the baker's sweat, is to be counted into the *bread* we eat ; the labour of those who broke the oxen, who digged and wrought the iron, and stones, who felled and framed the timber employed about the plough, mill, oven, or any other utensils, which are a vast number, requisite to this corn, from its being seed to be sown, to its being made bread, must all be *charged on the account of Labour*."

So, you see, my friends, that instead of your being poor, you are the only rich, there being little or no property except in labour. If, therefore, you are in want, it must be owing to some great deception that is practised upon you ; and you ought never to rest, until you have found out that deception, and have fortified yourselves against it, and such as it, in future. There are those that tell you that you cannot work without "Capital," that is *paper*, or bank notes, which, they say, is required to put you all in motion, and to "cheer on labour to the utmost stretch of its sinews." This is the grand secret by which the property is removed from you to those who do not deserve, nor would not, without you, have a mouthful of bread to eat. They tell you that if they were to deprive you of *bank notes*, there would be no money ; that you would get nothing for your work ; and, most astonishing as it is, you have been made to believe this ;

Although it is but as yesterday since the scheme was invented : and, although, you must know, when you come to think, that England flourished for a thousand years before, and has never been so happy since. We read, continually, in the Bible of gold and silver, but no man can find a word about banks or bank notes : before the origin of which, men indeed worked for low wages, even for a penny a day ; but, then, the penny furnished them with every comfort. And, we find that in the act 23rd of Edward III, wages, for agricultural labour, were fixed *by law* ; and that women had a penny a day ! and men, from 4d. to 6d. per day ; but, at the same time, we also find, that a pair of shoes were then sold for 4d., russet broadcloth, per yard, 1s. 1d., a stall fed ox, £1 4s., a grass fed ox, 16s., a fat sheep, 1s. ; a fat hog, two years old, 3s. 4d. ; a fat goose, 2½d. ; ale, 1d per gallon ; wheat, the quarter, 3s. 4d. ; white wine, the gallon, 6d. ; red ditto, 4d. ; Now, when we compare this with our present condition, we are astonished to see the difference so much in favour of the dark ages of catholicism, when a labourer could earn a pair of shoes in a day ; or a yard of broad cloth in three days ; a fat ox in thirty-two days ; a fat sheep in three days ; a fat hog, two years old, in eight days !! a bushel of wheat in a day !! two fat geese in a day ; four or five gallons of ale in a day ; or a gallon of the best wine in a day. But since we have become so much enlightened, and so *reformed* withal, as to put ourselves under the guardianship of the bankers and loan-mongers, we find that a labourer is occupied a week in earning those necessities of life. which his *benighted* forefathers earned in a day.

February 28th, 1842.

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## LETTER IV.

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MY FRIENDS—I shall here endeavour to explain to you how the wholesale juggle, that I have spoken of, is performed. It

is now in the act of being performed, in the United States of North America; and we will take those states as an example. There always were cunning people who would live, by cheating the rest; but it remained for this *reforming* age to perfect the art of swindling. They have, in those states, created a thousand banks, which have driven out of that country all real money, supplying its place with their paper money, for the use of which, they charge from 6, to 50 per cent. per annum!! Thus they possess the means to buy every thing, and they, annually, buy the power to model the laws to suit their purposes.

Second Act—The legislature, which is composed chiefly of themselves, get up some pretence for wanting money, and they make laws to borrow the same at interest.

Third Act—In their characters of loan-mongers, they lend to themselves, in the characters of legislators, bits of paper, which, they call, the money required. Then they contract with themselves for certain jobs, and divide the said money amongst them. Then the transaction is complete. They call it a law: and call upon the care-taking, industrious people, ever after, for annual interest. But, as an example, I will give you an extract from a message of a Governor of Pennsylvania, dated, Dec. 6th, 1832.

“It may not,” said he, “be improper to remark, that in negotiating the several loans above mentioned, there will have been a clear gain to the commonwealth, after the remaining instalments shall have been paid over, of 375,964 dol. 14 cents, in the premiums or bounties paid for no other consideration than the privileges of receiving the loan.”

Here you see they pay for being allowed to fasten themselves on the industry of the country. That is, they cut up, into strips, another quire or two of paper, and press pictures upon them with plates of copper, this they give, in addition to the sum for which they are to have interest; and, the while all this is going on, those that suffer, talk of the benighted Indians,

telling us how "Billy Penn" obtained their land for a few blue beads.

When these note lenders, for whom no name known among men is sufficiently vile, have "funded" their notes, they then sell out the stock, and in the names of their wives, children, and friends, buy estates, or some other stock to the same amount. They then break, and their families are substantially seated in riches.

These demands on the multitude drive them to madness, one day setting fire to towns; tearing down churches, chapels, and public buildings; another day, the private houses of their best friends go to wrack, and, frequently, putting to death without trial, their fellow citizens, attributing their grievances to every thing but the right thing. A glimpse of which, had they sense enough to obtain one, would cause them to trample their goading oppressors under their feet. The Bankers know this, and, seeing that there cannot be a possibility of, for ever, drawing from the people, *interest*, for the use of the "circulating medium," are preparing to do it in the name of national creditors, making the people believe that nothing is so desperately wicked as to break faith with such honourable patriots. And expecting that those who are raving against them, as bankers, will respect them in their new characters, and will continue to believe, that though their country flows with milk and honey, they cannot live without "national creditors."

Well, this is what is doing in America. In England it was done, some years ago, and hence, (together with the present banking system) the tremendous weight that hangs upon you.

When I have been one of a swarm of rail-road travellers, generally got together from the Spas or small "wens," and bowling towards the large one, there to join two millions of others. When I have beheld, for fifteen or twenty miles round the "wen," the tens of thousands of fund-holder's Villas, adorned by far more beautiful names than are to be found in the

English language, and which, in my own time, have nearly all been erected, and when from these my thoughts, fleetier than the cars I rode in, have been exploring the dens of consumption about the Bank and Stock Exchange; from thence to the West End, then to the East; and, indeed, to every part of London, there to see the masses of people, from the highest to the lowest, always consuming and never producing; when my thoughts have taken a wing to Smithfield, then back to Mark Lane, then to the Docks, and, of all things, to the Government cellars, to behold the wine and the liquors that, if let into a dock, would float the English navy; when I consider that from hence every whipster's table is now-a-days furnished with "Port and Sherry," and that this, and every luxury, as well as every necessary, if not produced, is exchanged for that which is produced by the working people of this country. When I have considered these things, then I have come to the conclusion that the half starved manufacturers, and the group of ragged creatures that, looking out of the car windows, I see here and there at work in the fields, that these workers, be they ever so willing, never can support all this extravagance. And that the time is come, when great changes, in spite of what can be done to prevent them, must and will take place. Even a glimmering of prosperity cannot, I think, again be made to appear, and certainly no permanent good, until the wand of destruction is applied to the national debt.

Many and various have been the schemes to ease the pressure, but **all** have proved fallacious. The sufferers were told that to reform their parliament would be to restore them to something like good old English customs. And some who told them this, were the wisest and the best of men. They erred, however, in believing that a reformed parliament would devise means for the getting rid of the debt; which it did not do; and hence all our hopes were blighted.

The Irish were, from Catholic emancipation, and the reform

together, to be doubly blessed ; yet they have not been benefited to the amount of a single potatoe.

They have poor laws given to them, and we have had our poor laws "amended." We have had tithe commutation laws ; rural police laws ; and, during these ten years of "reformation," we have been favoured with a variety of laws ; all promising to give great relief, but all failing even to stop the rapid progress of the disease. And, while the interest of the debt be paid, if we have ten thousand other laws, I will stake my life upon it, not one of them would hit upon our complaint. Sir Robert, and all the Sirs, in the world, to help him, cannot bring forward a remedy, barring the abolition of part, or the whole of the debt. And if he reduces the debt, it will only afford another opportunity to continue the system ; until its increasing oppression arrives at the next pass, beyond which the people's sufferings will not let it go ; when it may again be reduced, and so on, for ever used as a sort of "sliding scale," adjusting itself to the capabilities of the industrious to keep the idlers. Never, therefore, listen to any scheme for lessening the debt ; unless it be accompanied by means to pay off, without delay, the remaining part and for blotting out for ever the accursed contrivance. To give us comfort, these are the only means, and to carry which into effect, we must be very careful not to select men that owe their fortunes to the things here complained of. Those who plunged us into these calamities are not likely to rescue us from them. "We cannot gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles."

March 4th, 1842.

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## LETTER V.

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MY FRIENDS,—It may not be amiss here to describe to you the dress of those who used to work on the land ; for, they once had a dress, suitable to them, and were not, as now, covered, if

covered at all, with old clothes, that had formerly decorated all the rogues in the country.

I will begin with the shoes, the soles of which were an inch thick, nailed all over with hob nails, the toes and heels were plated with iron, the front piece turning up so as to cover the ends, and protect them from the clods of the valley. The upper leathers were thick enough for the soles of a dandy's boots. They were made to come up to the middle of the leg, and were laced with horse skin laces.

The stockings were knit and were of the stoutest worsted. The breeches of leather, a tight fit, and buttoned with six or eight metal buttons, each, at the knees; below them, in sight, was a red garter, which, on the blue stocking, shewed to advantage. The breeches did not come up higher, than the hips. No suspenders in those days. When the men, under the new system, began to get pot-bellied, and the bones fleshless, suspenders were found to be necessary. The waistcoat was of worsted, between it and the breeches, was seen two or three inches of a home spun, linen, shirt, worth a dozen of any cotton shirts that were ever put on the back of man. The coat was of corded fustian, lined with wash leather; and, monstrous pockets also of leather. Buttons of metal, the size of a crown piece. Round the neck was a chocolate coloured, Indian silk handkerchief, on which was, here and there, a cluster of yellow spots. The hat was of wool or of goats hair, or both, and weighed a pound each at least.—Dear me!! the “Reformers” will say, how cumbersome these things must have been. Cumbersome! you poor spindle shanked creatures, what would be cumbersome to such as you, would be as gossamer to men like them. They fought the battles of their country, and were a terror to all the evil-doers in the world; no crouching then, no eternally suing for peace. How such as you will come out when your country is beset by formidable enemies, remains to be seen.

The smock frocks were much as they are now, but they were generally worn both by masters and men.



These men were remarkably fond of shewing their money. If sixpence was wanted, the whole was worked to the top of the salmon coloured linen purse; where, unintentionally, as the owner would have us believe, it was all made visible, a handful of silver; and, generally, five or six guineas in gold, all of which would be sure to be shewn before the clumsy thumb and finger could fumble out the sixpence required. This ceremony over, the whole was let jingling down, and the purse twisted round till it formed a ball as big as one's fist; this was put into the tight breeches pocket, where it was the pride of the owner to see it project in a prominent manner. The opposite pocket was the place for the knife; not the bloody "bowie knife," invented for the purposes of assassination, but a buck's horn handle knife, with a blade as sharp as a razor, for the purpose of cutting beef and bacon. With the exception of the purse, (and the watch, which I had overlooked), with these exceptions, a boy when first breeched was, as to dress, the picture of his father.

So much for this department; and, surely, nothing can be evidence stronger of the happiness of the people, than to know that they were well and substantially dressed.

The women were dressed in proportion to the men; not in gewgaws and trifling glazed up cotton. If the wives and daughters of a labouring man can now get any thing better than rags to cover them, it is by saving, out of their miserable allowance, a penny or two a week, to put into the parson's club, so that he may lay it out, for them, to the "best advantage." By which means they are decorated out, once a year, in a tawdry, coloured dress; half a dozen whole suits of which, do not cost so much, and are not worth a quarter so much, as one woollen petticoat, to say nothing of the misery derived from the former, and of the comfort derived from the latter.

The other day I saw at work on the roads an old man, that I have known as a labourer, for nearly fifty years; he could hardly stand up, and had been obliged, he said, to lie down several times

in the course of that day, being afflicted by a rupture, in addition to his other calamities.

He told me, and his appearance confirmed his statement, that he was dying for want of food; that his wife had, for a long time, been unable to get out of her bed, and that between them they had but five shillings a week; for which, said he, though I work from morning till night, they consider me a burden to them. The tears ran down his cheeks while comparing these things with those of his youth. "I and my father" said he "used to labour hard, but we had every comfort that we desired; my mother and sisters spun, and knit, and brought their earnings to the fireside. Now my wife and daughters are shut up in the house all winter, nothing to do, little to eat, and scarcely a rag to cover them." Then, looking at the rags that covered himself, he said, "what a garb is this, for a labouring man." His hat was of the finest texture, very small brim, and monstrous large crown, having been worn, by its original owner, at least fifteen years back. His coat a cut off, swallow-tailed, thing, that had once been black. Instead of the leather breeches, he had a pair of striped pantaloons, the ragged bottoms of which were tied up in other rags that had been gaiters. The whole suit seemed as if it had regularly descended from the highest to the lowest. "And look," said the old man, "at the young labourers with their cloth caps, decorated with ribbons, stuck upon the tops of their heads; looking more like show men, than labourers. We were taught to detest every thing that was not useful and substantial. These fellows are satisfied with any baubling thing."

These caps that he speaks of are worn instead of the stout wool hats; they are sold at six-pence each, are made out of old clothes, that, perhaps, have had half a dozen masters, before the Jews put them to this the last of purposes. And such is the difference between the present and the former dress of the labouring classes.

March 7th, 1842.

## LETTER VI.

MY FRIENDS,—I trust that a few more remarks on the manners and customs of your fathers may not be thought unworthy of your notice. I wish you to see these things clearly ; because, it is by comparison that you will be enabled to judge as to whether “intellect is marching” for any good purpose. And whether the “facilitating of business, and saving of labour,” are for the good of mankind or not.

Well, then, a farm of two hundred acres, used to have half a dozen servants hired into the house. Now there are not one-third as many. The farmer selected these servants at the annual fairs, hiring them by the year, always taking care to choose such as promised by their looks to be kind and good natured. Qualities upon which his interest greatly depends. For who would be troubled for a year with an untoward, surly fellow, that would illuse the cattle, and neglect that which he had engaged to attend to ? The agreement being made, a shilling was given to the servant, and he was as firmly secured, for the time, as if he had enlisted for a soldier. And so on, until the farmer had the number required ; while his wife was engaged in selecting her girls. All this done, he, and his wife, returned home, as they came, both on one horse, she riding on a pillion behind him.

The business part of the day being over, the lads and lasses had nought else but enjoyment to think of. Having just been paid for their last year's service they had plenty of money, and for which, plenty of scientific characters were ready to amuse them. Here you would see the gipsy fiddlers, performing for two pence a dance. There “Old Moll” the fortune-teller, tracing the lines of the damsel's hands. Then the wild beasts ; the players ; and sights at accommodating prices, from a shilling, to a half-penny each. If your taste was for vocal music, in its pure,

natural state, it could be indulged, by listening to Jack and his Sall, singing an "entire new song." Tired of this, you could have a throw at the snuff-boxes ; or try your luck in the lucky-bag. If these and the like kind of amusements flagged on your spirits, you might away to the Inns, and get them refreshed ; where you would find every room, from the ground to the garret, crowded. Some striking a deal with cheap John ; others dancing, singing, drinking, smoking, making love, and treating their lasses with "Banbury cakes." So they went on, till they were surfeited with enjoyment ; when they paired off, and proceeded to their homes ; from thence, in a few days, to their new places, there to remain till "Old Michaelmas" again came round to relieve them.

There were, I verily believe, no other people in the world so happy ; they were all health and spirit. With such employment, and such living, they could not be otherwise. Nothing care-worn about them : no such trouble as we now see depicted on the brows of all we meet.

Every one being hired for a particular purpose, nothing else was expected of them. In their departments it was their pride to excel. The waggoner gloried in his horses ; and, to see a team of them, going out with a load of grain, was truly a noble sight. The shining lustre of their polished skins, the gearings, the high leather housings ; and a waggon that nothing, it could hold, was too heavy for. The driver with his best smock frock on, marched by the side of his horses, not quite so graceful, but certainly, as proud as the commander of an army. Over his shoulder bent the best whalebone whip ; which, when we passed or met him, would be sure to be cracked ; at which the horses would start, as if they would jump out of their skins. Then the driver considered his own an enviable post, as well he might, for he was at the top sprig of his profession.

This kind of emulation existed in all the departments. The shepherd would have been ashamed to have shewn his face, if his flock had been, in any respect, worse than his neighbour's.

But, to particularize these things would be an endless task, else what might be said in favour of the charming dairy maids, and their rich and luxuriant dairies, containing the treasures, gathered from the flowery meadows by thirty or forty cows. Here, great as was the attention required, it would have been in vain to have looked for a thing out of place. If the metal hoops that bound the churns and the pails had not been bright enough to shew you your face, she that had neglected them would have sadly lessened her chance for a husband.

When this hiring was over there was not a young man or woman to be found out of service. The married labourers worked by the week, or piece, boarding at home, except in harvest time. Some famous for hedge cutting; others for draining, others for woodmen, others for thatchers, and so on. Always fully employed, at wages that enabled them to live as well as the young ones that were in the farm houses. The wives of the labourers did not sit, all winter, shivering in their huts, living upon roots, and no kind of employment to earn a mouthful of any thing better; but they spun flax, hemp, and "jersey." When they had enough for themselves, they spun for hire. By this means they contrived to furnish the butter, tea, sugar, and the little matters that add so much to the comforts of a family. The butter was then sold at the village shops, or exchanged with the spinners for their labour; and consumed, as it ought to be, by those who assisted, directly, or indirectly, to produce it. This spinning, and hand-loom weaving, had been an employment for women, of every gradation, from the earliest period on record, down to the barber Arkwright's invention, that superseded it. You will find in the 35th chapter of Exodus, 25th verse, these words: "And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their own hands."

And again, "a good wife" saith Solomon, "seeketh wool, and flax, and she layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff."—The wife of Hector, too, was discoursing with her

husband about the battle, in which he was going to engage, when the hero desired her to leave that matter to his care, and go to her maids and mind her spinning. Homer, who tells us this, lived 907 years before Christ, making it now, 2748 years since.

And, we read that one of the conditions of peace between the Sabines and the Romans, in the time of Romulus, was that the Sabine women, who chose to remain with their Roman husbands, should be exempt from all labour except *spinning*.

Now, then, consider, deeply consider, that, for the first time, this spinning with their own hands is superseded. What has already been the consequence we know, but, the final result has yet to be seen.

There were no machines in the days of my boyhood, for sowing, mowing, horse hoeing, threshing, winnowing, churning, draining, hay making, no, nor for the making of wearing apparel, except the wheel and handloom. Both of which are so ancient, that we know not how long they have been used. Fair Andromache was weaving when she heard of her husband's death :

"Far in the close recesses of the dome,  
Pensive she ply'd the melancholy loom."

All these things were done by hand, and the want of employment, until this "new era," had never been known. Now the power looms, for the benefit of a monopolising few, do the work of millions, and drive those millions to pluck the berries from the hedges for a subsistence. Out of this grows the necessity for the eternal scheming to keep under the "disaffected labourers." It is enough to drive one crazy when one thinks of the myriads of projects that have, of late years, succeeded each other for the purpose of "meliorating the condition of the working classes." The working classes are dissatisfied, (as they were in the reign of Elizabeth), because from them is filched their substance. This dissatisfaction can never be allayed, nor ought ever to be allayed, until a sufficient quantity of the good things are again possessed by, and secured to, the suffering people. On that foundation I

would recommend harmony, on any other I would rather that  
 “discord should prevail for ever.”

March 10th, 1842.

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## LETTER VII.

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MY FRIENDS,—By way of a sample of the doings of the  
 “meliorators,” I will make an extract from the proceedings  
 of the Agricultural Society, that I before noticed. Their  
 meeting was held, in this case, at Warwick, in January,  
 1832. The company consisted of Lords, Baronets, Reverends,  
 Bankers, Squires, Gentlemen Farmers, and others, who were,  
 according to their own account, the choicest flowers of the nation.  
 Not, individually extolling themselves; No! indeed, nothing is  
 so fulsome, *to Gentlemen*, as arrogant egotism; while nothing is  
 so common, and agreeable to them, as a preconcerted plan for  
 praising each other. Mr. Bracebridge proposed a resolution,  
 which had, for its object, the allotment of portions of land to the  
 labourers; and, he requested, the talented, Mr. Salisbury, to  
 advocate the same. Mr. S. complied; and, among other remarks  
 said, that, “with regard to the proportion of land to be allotted  
 to the labourer, he would say that if his own labourers or the  
 labourers of any gentlemen present, were to employ any of the  
 time usually dedicated to their masters, in the cultivating of their  
 own land, he thought it would be very injurious to them: but if  
 they employed their time before, or after their usual hours of  
 labour, upon land that might be allotted to them, they would do  
 more for their families in that way, than they could by any other  
 means.\*\*\*\*But he could suggest a plan that would employ the  
 peasantry with the greatest advantage to themselves and to the  
 whole community; he could point out to them a great number of  
 articles which were grown in the surrounding towns, and which  
 were never heard spoken of amongst them as being fit for use.  
 \*\*\*\*He was convinced that to grow them would be the means

above all others, of increasing the comforts of all the poor in the country."

He then, enumerated the articles, to which he had referred; and amongst them, were "peppermint, spearmint, pennyroyal, and thyme"!!!

"He had lately found an article, too, growing on the hedges, which would be a good substitute for candle wicks, and he had lately made a candle with that article, and some mutton fat, which would be preferred to the common candles: and if he had one hundred children he would soon prove to the society that he could soon teach them how to get their own living."—"These," said the reporter, "and several other observations, made by Mr. Salisbury, were heard by the company with great attention."

As to the allotment system, I was an advocate for it, thirty years ago; and, long before that society ever thought of such a thing. In the parish where I then lived there were many acres of land left in trust for the poor, and was letting for a pound an acre. I could see no reason why this land, *at the same rent*, should not be divided among the labourers; and, accordingly, I proposed that it should be so divided; which, with the help of one or two others, and continual perseverance, on their *part*, for I had left the country, was at last brought about. The men had not, however, as I am informed, had possession of it more than two years; when, such as these *attentive listeners*, thought that justice required the rent should be doubled. They saw that the land produced five-times as much as it had ever done before, and they thought, or pretended to think, it was owing to its *quality*; instead of to the sweat of the poor man's brow. This setting the labourers land is now common; but, like every thing else that has ever been done for them, it does them more harm than good. In the first place, they, generally, pay three or four times as much rent as the land is worth; and then the farmers taunt, and plague them to death. A labourer told me



the other day, that he had given up his lot ; finding that it was too much for him to manage after he had done a day's work for his master ; and, "besides," said he, "the farmers refused to employ me while I had any of my crop left ; so while I was getting the crop, I worked night and day, and when I had got it, I had nothing to do till it was gone."

Now my friends, what I wish, respecting the allotment scheme, is, that every man who desires it, and is able to manage it, should have at least three or four acres of land, be enabled to keep his cow, and to grow the food he requires. And I wish him to have such land at the same price as the farmers have theirs ; for, I hold any man to be the worst of extortioners that takes the more from a man *because he is poor*. I wish to see the labourers at work, on their land, in a rational manner, taking, now and then, a day for that purpose, and making a pleasure of it, instead of toiling till their very bones can hardly creep to their resting place, after they have "done a day's work for their masters." Let any man, that is not naturally a tyrant, imagine my wishes, as here expressed, carried into effect, and he must, as in such imagination, he passes through the farming districts, see them a paradise, when compared to what they are now. "But," says the bloated farmer, of a thousand acres, "this would make the men too independent." And, why, Mr. Graspall, should they not be independent ? You speak as if you had an inheritance in them. If they ask nothing of you, what right have you to desire them to be at your nod and command ? "O ! but we could not get our work done at all." Then do it yourselves : or, if this be impossible, let your farms be divided and sub-divided until it be possible. God's family cannot suffer by such a transaction ; on the contrary, it would give pleasure and plenty to millions of industrious people, while it would give pain only to a few wine guzzling, senseless farmers, that think they have a right to live of the best without work ; and to give neither victuals nor drink, even during the harvest time, to their

labourers. I know a fox-hunter, farming about four hundred acres of land, that treats his friends with "port and sherry," and that actually brews a peck of malt, at a time; which, together with the bran from a bag of wheat, and a few drugs, makes two hogsheads of, what he calls, *harvest beer*! And, of what the men call *camomile tea*, which they throw away, preferring the water from the brooks. Thus have the men been reduced, till, generally, their skins hang about them like loose leather, bearing no more resemblance to the labourers that I spoke of in my other letters, than if they were not of the same race. There are, however, notwithstanding their degraded condition, a few sensible and manly labourers yet left, between one of whom, and this, *camomile tea*, farmer, the following conversation, on cheap and dear bread, lately took place:—

FARMER—"Why Thomas, I hear you are against the corn laws. I cannot see how you can be against em. Why dont you know if there be no corn laws there will be no more labour in England; and that a parcel of outlandish farmers will send us more corn than we can eat?"

LABOURER—"Well, so as un has plenty, without so much work, it will be better than being worked to death and half-pined besides, for what I knows."

FARMER—"Yes, there will be plenty, indeed. A shilling loaf will be as big as a bushel; but, if you have only six-pence, you know, Thomas, you cannot buy it."

LABOURER—"Well, then I will get em to cut un six-penneth. A piece, as big as half-a-strike, would get mouldy before I can yet it."

FARMER—"Oh! Thomas, if the land yent protected, none of us gret farmers cant hold our farms, and then what will you do for work?"

LABOURER—"Well, if you cant hold um because um be too big, why then um must be parted, and us labourers may come in for a bit on um. We knows how that hood be, by what

was when wheat was three or four shillings a strike. Any buddey might have land then, and, if it had not been for that, us should never had the little lots us have got."

I think if this labourer had been at the meeting of the Lords and Gentlemen, their profound advocate would have stood but little chance with him. He would have soon shown the absurdity of the newly discovered *means* that are to increase the comforts of the, once proud and giant like, man, who used to crack his whip to the noble team, but who is now to be made happy by having, at as much more rent as any one else would give for it, a few feet of ground, for the purpose of growing pennyroyal, and thyme!!!

The advocate had found an article, too, growing on the hedges, that, "if he had one hundred children he would soon prove to the society that he could soon teach them to get their own living." If he means the word *them* to relate to the society, and that he can teach them to get their own living, he would, indeed, deserve the applause of every man in the country. But he did not mean that, if he had they would not have heard him with such "great attention." At any rate, I wish to God that, if he be living, and be able bodied, he may never, while that is the case, have another mouthful of bread, except he earns it by his new *ways* and *means*. And this is not an uncharitable wish, because he asserts that *they are above all others for obtaining a livelihood*.

What strange mildew could it be that had settled upon the brains of the leading men of my native county, and caused them to be so lost to all dignity of thought, and reflection, as to listen at all, and much less with *attention*, to the abominable fooleries of this man?

This society very well knows that all is not secure. Every now and then they hear the roarings of the hungry lions. To allay the terrific sound, they devise all sorts of means, except giving up the plunder; and, among the rest, we find that great

attention was paid to this "*pennyroyal scheme*." Of which I have not patience to write another line.

March 13th, 1842.

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## LETTER VIII.

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MY FRIENDS—The next thing I mention to you, you will I doubt not, consider to be very strange. It is this. That though there was so much happiness in the village, there was no religion except the Established Church. This Church is now surrounded by fifty different sects; and, not one amongst them that does not despise her, on account of her intolerable darkness, and ignorance. They seem determined to tear her to pieces for having kept the people so long in a state of barbarism; though, when we consider the matter, we find that, the moment these new lights came, all the good things, that I have mentioned, and that I have witnessed, began to depart. I do not charge the new lights with having caused this, but I wish it to be observed that they did not prevent it. We did not formerly condemn each other to the "level lakes of fire and brimstone" for not thinking alike. We never dreamt of there being any religion in the world, except our own, and that, at the head of which, as our parson told us, was the whore of Babylon; meaning the Catholic Church, which it was his business, in part, to revile; and the ruin of which church, had in a great measure, ceased to be felt, owing, chiefly, to the good effects of the poor-law; but, in part, to the contracting of public debts and spending, in wasteful profusion, the money; and in part, also, to the invention of machinery, which enabled us to produce inferior kind of goods, so starched and glazed up as to please the fool's eye, both at home and abroad. In the making of these goods there were employed great numbers of people, at reasonable wages, until other countries could imitate us. But these

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things are, like their parent paper money, "strength in the beginning and weakness in the end," as brandy is to a man who drinks it. Such a man is pleased with his own bluffed appearance, and takes the standing colour in his face for a sign of health, until his hand begins to tremble ; his breath to fail him ; and he soon falls, a poor half-rotten creature, into the grave. This nation appears to me to have passed through part of an ordeal similar to this ; it is not got to the end ; but, if something be not *immediately* done, it will be too far gone to admit of remedy. We were, however, speaking of religion, in days gone by. When, the minister of the gospel, of that village, was a good old curate, for more than forty years he had never changed his place, and his deeds could only be illustrated by a Goldsmith, whose country clergyman was, in all respects, his fellow :

" At church with meek and unaffected grace,  
His looks adorned the venerable place."

If any of his flock were afflicted in body, mind, or estate, he hastened to console them. If there was a quarrel among them he allayed the agitation and adjusted the difference ; and his frown was a sufficient reproof to the offender. If, to his knowledge, there had been any fault, during the week, he would, in a circuitous manner, notice them, so as not to be misunderstood by the guilty. He never usurped himself, nor suffered others to do so with impunity. He required their attention, at least, once on a Sunday, to hear him perform his duty ; and to receive the good instruction his admonitory sermon never failed to give. He did not require of his flock any great sanctity, much less fanaticism and cant ; on the contrary, he loved to see the boys at their sports, and if he did not encourage, he never objected to them even on the Sabbath day : when they gathered together, from all parts of the parish, and, in the field adjoining the churchyard, played at foot-ball, for an hour or two, before service commenced. On the parson appearing, they repaired to the porch, and arranged themselves in order on both sides

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the way, waiting to receive him. When he approached they pulled off their hats, and stroking down their hair, as he walked up between them, each made him a truly respectful bow, and followed him into the church. Not a person was there, nor in the whole parish, whether there or not, that was not, on that day, clean and well dressed.

Instead of tearing each other to pieces about modes of faith, they had but one belief, and loved their neighbours. Families were not for ever distracted and made fit for nothing but to be plucked by the designing lazy hypocrite, who pretends to have the only key to the expounding of the scriptures; and who would persuade his congregation to eat straw and be satisfied, in hopes of reward in the other world, while he, himself, is making sure of every thing that is good in this. From one end of the country to the other we hear murmuring at the enormous expenses of the "Established Church," yet the murmurers are voluntarily paying twenty times as much for religious instructions as was formerly paid; though, after all, there is little or no religion among them. Where there is not a man to be found with faith, sufficiently strong, to enable him to stand up against the rogueries and absurdities of the day, and plead unceasingly the cause of the oppressed and defrauded, there can be no religion. What availeth all the *faith* in the world to a man that will stand silently by and see the rights of his poor brethren taken away? See usurers and chartered paper money makers, who, having become strong enough, without consulting others, to make their own laws, come, in the name of those laws, and take the bread from the mouths of the people. You see no Apostle come forward, and, in the name of his God, demand that right should be done. In Catholic times the Pope would not suffer even kings to infringe on the rights of the poor. But now, any vile set, that have craft enough, or money enough, to obtain a CHARTER, can, with impunity, plunder the working classes to the utmost extent. And no men are more

implicated in such deeds than are the clergy, of almost all denominations.

March 16th, 1842.

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## LETTER IX.

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MY FRIENDS,—I might go on exhibiting the bright and agreeable part of my narrative, but, as I must stop short of a complete description, I will stop here, and proceed to state, as well as I can recollect, the time and manner the *superlative curse* became predominant, and ranged at will, with such tremendous power that but few men dared, in the slightest degree, to oppose or obstruct its progress.

Between forty and fifty years back, provisions and most other things, suddenly became double the price they had ever been known at before: and, from this period I date the “new era.” Doubtless the evil demon was seen stalking forth earlier, by those who were older and more capable of observation; but the first thing that made an impression on my recollection, as to the changes that were then taking place, was the alarming riots among those excellent, and before, quiet and orderly labourers. About this time the village Parson frequently spoke of our being beset by enemies more dangerous than any that had before appeared among men. “We are threatened” said he “with invasion by a fierce and haughty foe, who would swallow us up quick, so wrathful is his indignation.” This sentence was in a form of prayer. We, the young ones, and the old ones too, for what I know, took it in the literal sense, and actually expected to be swallowed up. Many a time I have gone to bed half frightened to death. But, finding that the monster with “tremendous paunch, awful and deep,” never made his appearance, we soon lost all fear of him. Next Paine was pictured to us, with a tail, and a cloven foot; and we were assured that

the devil sent him to destroy our religion. We, therefore, made two straw devils; the one the old devil himself, and the other his son, "Tom Paine." We hung them up in a tree; threw, and shot at them, until we were tired; and then burnt them to ashes. This was the first exploit, of the kind, known, by any then living, ever to have taken place in that village. After this we heard very little more of these formidable enemies. Though, for my own part, my mind never knew what it was to be at rest again. I was for ever comparing the new order of things, with the old one; and finding that some old fashioned comfort, or other, was continually being lopped off, and some curse engrafted in its stead.

The war went on, and the farmers were, many of them, embodied into the yeomanry cavalry; and most men, that could afford it, became volunteers; while others were forced, by ballot, into the militias. All this fuss bewildered the people till they knew not what they were about, and prepared them to be gulled by the schemes of funding and banking. When this mighty legion was completed, the use it was put to was to keep down the working people, who had been reduced from plenty to, what they then considered, great want and deprivation: but, what, when compared to your condition, was a tolerable happy state.

I well remember, one winter's morning before daylight, we were aroused from our sleep by a great and unusual shouting of the labourers, who had assembled, and were about to march to the county town, where they, with others, demanded the provisions, that were brought to market, without money or price. The new cavalry were galloping about to meet them. This happened at all the market towns, repeatedly, and the labourers were finally subdued, their spirits broken; and, from time to time, and bit by bit, their rights frittered away. Till the *famous poor law*, the *magna charta* of the labouring man, is gone. It is a mockery to say that a vestige of it is yet remaining.

You are now, in a great measure, deprived of your employment, that, in all ages, enabled the working man to live happily by in-



dustry. You are no longer wanted at home, but, there are countries in which you are required, to clear the forests, drain the swamps, and allay the poisonous vapour, ready to receive, at a future day, a cargo of loan mongers ; among whom, those countries are already divided. Go, says the Malthusian, go to Swan River and such like places, where you are wanted to do that which, at present, machinery cannot do. Talk not to us of your right to a living on the soil that gave you birth ; we tell you that you are no longer wanted, and that, if you will not do as we bid you, you shall starve ; you shall perish by the way side ; it is just that it should be so ; it is the doctrine of the Rev. Malthus, a disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus. No!! stop, say the apparently subdued labourers, roused with resentment at the blasphemous doctrine. "No," say they, "God, the father of us all, bid us be fruitful and multiply, and told us, that every moving thing that liveth should be meat for us. All the green herbs, said he, and every thing I give to you, the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill and dwell therein in safety. We behaved not ourselves disorderly among you, neither did we eat any man's bread for nothing, but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you ; not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example for you to follow us. God, the father of us all, commanded that, if any one will not work, neither shall he eat. Do you work ? Shew us your sun burnt faces ; shew us your hardened hands, instead of the works of your hardened hearts, and convince us, that you have complied with the condition, upon which it is said, man shall eat. If you cannot do this, it but ill becomes you to talk thus to those on whom you solely depend. We have endured your insolence long enough, death is preferable to longer submission. Here then we make our stand!! for the rights, recorded by the God of the universe. Willing to work, and determined to eat."

To this it must soon come. It is a matter that is hasting,

with rapid strides, to some sort of a conclusion. Every hour the labourers are getting less to do ; and, consequently, allowed a mere nothing for what they do. If I go into a barn, in the absence of the threshers, I behold a clattering machine that knocks out in a week, the grain of a farm ; to do which, formerly, would have given employment to four men for the whole winter ; and comfort, during that time, to their wives and children. The winnowing, too, is all done by machinery. If I hear the heavy churn swagging, in the dairy, I go in expecting to see the couple of stout men engaged in turning it ; but, I find it going by itself, the power that drives it, being invisible to me. If I go into the meadows, where there used to be all the lads and the lasses of the village merrily following each other, while tedding, and making the hay, there I find a machine or two doing this work. If I look for the drainers of the land, I find their places also taken up by machinery. And even the ploughmen, and boys, and all the singing and whistling to the merry jingling of the traces, are, it seems, to be finally done away with. The following notice of which I took some time since from a newspaper.

#### STEAM PLOUGH.

“ Lord Henniker stated at the East Suffolk Agricultural dinner, that he had received a letter from a friend, in Lincolnshire, informing him, that in that neighbourhood, they had, already, a steam plough, which would harrow thirty acres, and plough eight acres per day.”

Thus again is displayed the consummate wisdom of the “astonishing age.” All other ages, from the days of Elisha, ploughed with their horses or oxen. The old prophet found his successor ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him. And again, “The messenger came to Job and said, the oxen were ploughing.” Strange ! strange, indeed !! that such *customs* should have continued so long, reserved, as it were, for thousands of years, for *us* to see the last of. Other ages were wise in their day, but we have discovered that their wisdom was foolishness.

And my opinions are very erroneous if similar discoveries are not made, by the next generation, with respect to us. However, for the present, let us consider, what is to become of the workers. Tens of thousands, we know, go to London, and to the "watering places." The most beautiful of the girls, to become harlots, and the rest, male, and female, to do the drudgery of the pampered; to be sunk in ignorance, poverty, and crime; and tens of thousands are employed in the fund-holder's army, to collect taxes of their fathers and brothers. And thousands more are now made police men; to watch the millions that are prowling about, and depending on chance for a mouthful of bread.

If we visit the cottage instead of finding it the cleanest and neatest under the sun, we find it, generally, a wretched hovel. The ovens have mouldered away, and in the recently built cottages none have been erected; the furniture is gone; the pewter is gone; the linen-wheel is not seen or heard; and, the light heeled maid, bounding backwards and forwards, while the howling spindle drew from her finger the jersey yarn, where is she? Her task is done; her wheel, with thousands more, are swallowed, by one piece of machinery within the walls of a single factory.

All these things, we are told, by the ignorant and conceited, are signs that we are marching to greatness that never had a parallel in history. Then there are others who affect to believe the system is bad; but they say "having got into it we must proceed." These do not consider that every improvement to the machinery already invented, as well as every new invention, gives a heavy turn to the screw that crushes two-thirds of the people. This crushing, I fear, will go on until self preservation, the great law that knoweth nothing of the word *must*, as an opponent, forces the two-thirds to obedience.

Let not the boasters think that machinery could not as well have been invented a thousand years ago as now, had it been thought wise to encourage it. But, it was ever, *till now*, deemed of the greatest importance to keep the people employed, at good

and sufficient wages ; being clearly foreseen that an opposite course would, (as it has done) throw the world into confusion.

Machinery injures the mechanics and manufacturers more, if possible, than it does those that work on the land.

No matter how ingenious a man may be, in his trade ; how skilful, industrious, sober : no, nor if he adds to these every other virtue, he cannot successfully contend against machinery. The very machine maker is ruined by his own success. He makes a machine that will make other machines, even of the same kind ; and when his work is put in motion, it mocks at its maker ; who is starving, for want of employment, while the inanimate thing, requiring nothing to eat, and a mere fool to work it, is doing the work of fifty, or in some cases, perhaps, five hundred men. And who do these things benefit ? Certainly not one in a thousand. Look at the miserable beings in Manchester, and other manufacturing places, who, when they have work at all, have to toil, incessantly, in the most unhealthy of places, for the coarsest of living ; and when they have no work, are doomed to starvation. Such miserable beings may well envy the happiness of the birds of the air, or the beasts of the field. And all this human misery is to be endured to enable a few to live in splendid seats round the neighbouring hills.

But, if we could so order machinery as to do all the labour and let every man benefit from it, I think, even that would be a great, and, perhaps, the greatest calamity that ever befell mankind. When the devil finds an idle man, it is said, he takes him into his service ; and were a whole nation to work for such a master it must be in a diabolical condition. Of all men I pity them the most that have nothing to do. Solomon, truly says, that, "the desire of a slothful man killeth him." Experience has convinced me that a man cannot be happy without employment. For a short time of my life circumstances threw me into a sumptuous way of living, without work, and I never was so miserable before, nor since, or ever so happy as when I returned to my humble, but precious fare, by my own fire side.

“The slothful man sayeth there is a lion without, I shall be slain in the street.” A beautiful figure is this!! What should we become if there were no longer necessity to fall the forests, to dig the mines, to cultivate the earth, to gather the fruit, and so on? We should become so effeminate that we should soon be afraid to go out of the house, lest we should be slain in the street.

But, those benefiting from machinery, scoff at argument (or even divine warning) against it, and they are determined to push it to the extremity. The end, however, in spite of all they can do, will come, in one way, or other; and every sensible man will prepare himself for it; keep his own reckoning, and put no trust in the *new era* philosophers, who have built up that which I fear they cannot, if they would, take down; but which will tumble of itself, and well for them if they escape unhurt by the fall.

March 20th, 1842.

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## LETTER X.

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MY FRIENDS—In a former letter I told you of the sudden rise of provisions; of the distress of the poor; of the riots; and of one part of the people having been made soldiers, and employed to put, and to keep, down the other part.

Just before this, *paper money* made its appearance among us. An old farmer having, for the first time, brought from market a *Guinea note*. We all flocked to see it, but, though so many fine things were told us in its favour, we could not, *at first*, respect it as a substitute for a *golden guinea*. The new bankers, however, soon contrived to remove our prejudice; and, among other innumerable schemes, they caused a ballad to be written, on the wonderful powers of Abraham Newland, the then governor of the Bank of England. Nothing was spared to make it popular, till at the fairs, and all sorts of holydays, throughout the country, ones ears were stunned by the bawlers of this ballad, until every

mouth was full of it, and those that were to be the victims to it would be, even at their labour, for ever humming ;

“ I have heard people say,  
Sham Abraham you may,  
But you cannot sham Abraham Newland.”

No ! poor ignorant souls, they could not sham, Mr. Newland, but, Mr. Newland, could, and did sham them, to some purpose ; he shammed them out of their beef, bacon, and ale, and gave them potatoes in exchange. And, when I think of that successful trick, I despair of any thing being sufficient to open, and to keep open, the eyes of the stupid. Though, I do not think the time can be far off, when this, the greatest of all tricks, will be sufficiently seen through, to cause the sufferers to bear it no longer.

The Bankers next sought out, in every village, as an assistant to get their money about, the most shrewd, cunning villain that was to be found. They filled his pockets with their trash, and he soon monopolized every good thing. He was now enabled to employ many tradesmen, and most of the labourers ; and his prompt payments made him, at once, the king of the village. Thus was the new money rapidly circulated. I do not think it was a single year, after they put out one and two pound notes, before every piece of gold had been driven out of circulation. That which remained in the country became an article of merchandise. The government, siding with these worse than devils, declared bank notes to be equal to gold. But the holders of the gold laughed, and drew tighter their purse strings. The government, then, tacitly acknowledged the depreciation of the notes, and sent their agents, in every direction, to buy up the gold. And in a few months, guineas were selling for twenty-eight or thirty shillings each, *paper money*. This price cleared out all that were moveable ; we seldom, *even as a curiosity*, saw one after.

Gold, coined or uncoined, had regulated the business affairs of

our country ever since the inhabitants had agreed to be governed by human laws. In the most ancient history, we read of talents of gold, and shekels of silver; and coin was used in Britain, before the birth of Christ. Surely it was no trifling affair, to see "customs," of so long a standing, removed to make room for jugglers, who would not suffer us to eat, drink, or to have our being, without paying tribute to them. No matter whether we, ourselves, borrow or not, pay interest we must, as sure as that each of us bear a share, directly or indirectly, in government taxation. If a manufacturer, a miller, a farmer, or no matter who, borrows bank notes, the interest of such notes must be paid by the consumers of the thing that he sells. And, it is shifted, from one to the other, until it comes to the labourer; who, having nothing to sell, *bears the whole*. It is true he has his labour to sell, but it is not in demand, having been superseded by machinery, and is, therefore, to be had at any price that is offered. But I am going to tell you how the new money worked in the village. The banker's chosen man had no sooner his pockets filled with notes, than he, and his family, looked upon the rest as an inferior order. All social intercourse with their old acquaintance was, at once, cut off. Hunting horses were bought for the young clod-hoppers, who were suddenly changed into "young masters;" and, the *misses* were sent to boarding school, to unlearn what they had learnt, and to qualify themselves for the wives of *Gentlemen*. As soon as the *young masters* were men enough, they joined the yeomanry cavalry; and, once a year, that cavalry was quartered at a large town, for two or three weeks, a practice which had more to do in demoralizing the farming districts than many are aware of, and which led to the total ruin of the said "young masters." If the young gentlemen had not tasted of the apple before, they were sure to taste of it then, and their eyes having been opened, on their return they pitied the darkness of the villagers, and set about to enlighten them; which they effected in such a masterly manner, that in a short time a youth

was ashamed if he was not considered a libertine, and instead of believing that the future prospects in life depended on virtuous and steady habits, he was taught to believe the contrary; and the effects of such teaching seldom failed to bring him to destruction.

There were many married men too, in the cavalry, upon whom the three weeks of epicurean schooling had not a much better effect. Thousands of families can trace their ruin to that circumstance. But, that, grievous as it is to them, would be nothing in a national point of view, were it not that it generally changed the habits of the people.

I shall enter into the proceedings of this banker's favourite; because, I think, that, in him, and his families, may be found an illustration of the workings of *paper money*, throughout the country. There being scarcely a village to be found but either has, or has had, a similar character to persecute and torment it. This man caused me many hours of serious reflection, when I was but a boy. I could not for the soul of me, discover what it was that so suddenly exalted him, and so distressed his unhappy neighbours. But, I resolved never to rest until I had discovered it, and done all that in me lay to expose, and put in the true light, the foulest of all mysteries. He is now gone to his final account; and, some tell us that his evil deeds should have been buried with him; but this is contrary to the line pursued by all writers, divine, or political; we find that the bible itself is full of the doings of the wicked, and of the punishment that was, and will be, inflicted upon them. This is done as a warning to others; and, for the same purpose it is that I am about to speak of men who, though not in the highest stations, where rests the greatest of responsibility, are still of consequence enough, in my estimation, to show that the great system of oppression could not have gone on without the assistance of such characters. They are, indeed, insignificant wheels, when we look at the vast piece of machinery to which they belong, but they are as necessary to the working of the thing as are those of larger magnitude; and it is important that we should well understand how they operate.



At the time the bankers began to heap their favours upon this chosen man, land became exceedingly valuable, on account of the high nominal prices that their new money had given to its fruits. The landlords, however, not having been accustomed to rising the rents scarcely ever did it, while the old ones lived; and, this was the reason why the farmers got so much out of their element. Wheat at a guinea a bushel! and rent the same as when wheat was three or four shillings a bushel!! No wonder that, to defend such a change, the young farmer should volunteer into "My Lord's Troop." Other provisions were in proportion. I have known bread at 1s. 10d. the quartern loaf; and bacon at 1s. 8d. the pound; and the price of labour, if advanced at all, to nothing like an adequate standard. This caused rioting, and found employment for the cavalry; for, it was a difficult job, (though it was at last effected) to make your fathers live upon one-quarter of the food that they had ever, *till then*, been accustomed to consume. Thus the farmers, having it all their own way, became rich; and, riches, when in possession of the ignorant, are often accompanied by insolence and brutality; which, in this case, with some very honourable exceptions, was beyond any thing; and, richly do they deserve, what it has, since, pleased God to give many of them, poverty and wretchedness. They attributed their success to the "march of intellect," and nothing was so common as to hear them, at their market tables, finding fault with the manners and management of the generation that had just preceded them. The one that I speak of presently got possession of more than half the parish. And when that cursed bill passed for lopping off a main limb from the poor man's rights, or for giving a plurality of votes to the large rate payers, *then he ruled absolute. In his own right, the village despot.* He made himself perpetual overseer, and churchwarden; and, being secure, *as he thought*, against detection, he systematized a plan for further robbing the rest of the parishioners. Not satisfied with the *overwhelming advantages the bankers had given him*, he made false en-

tries in his parish account, and as they were always in his possession, and none daring to question them, the fraud was not discovered until the grievances of the parish became so great as to cause a sort of rebellion against him. Then they examined the accounts, and found them fraudulent from end to end; he had cheated in every possible way, even to that of charging 6d. per week more to the widows, than he had ever allowed them. An action was commenced against him, but a *flaw was found* in the *indictment*, which called him an overseer of the poor, and which, in fact, *was the case*; but, *in law*, it appeared he was not so, on account of *some formality* that *he* had neglected at the time of his SELF APPOINTMENT. This was the pretended cause of his escape; but, the real cause, was that he opened his purse, or rather his pocket-book, at both ends, and that his own lawyer served himself from the one end, and his adversary's lawyer from the other. The plaintiffs might have tried him again, but they were alarmed at the expense, being, nearly all of them, ruined; and their children are now reduced to your own condition. One *good effect* it had, it shook the finances of the defendant, *great as they were*, so that they never recovered, and were the first of a series of disasters, which succeeded each other till his *miserable death*.

It was he, too, that was the first to cease "rendering customs to whom customs were due." To do away with the sheep-shearing; the harvest-home; and the boarding of the labourers during the harvest month. "John," said he to one of his men, as harvest was about to commence, "John, you have, of late, sadly complained about the starving condition of your family; I have been thinking that it would be better, *for them*, if, instead of your boarding with us, *in harvest*, you were to have an allowance of bacon, and take it home, then, you know, you would all share alike." Poor John! did not like the thoughts of departing from such an old, and excellent "custom," but, the reasons given seemed so powerful, in favour of his family, that he could not resist them.

When the next year came round the wretch pretended, (although he was living in grandeur never known to his race before,) that his expenses, and taxes, were so enormous, that he could not think of giving more than one-half of the bacon. The third year, the *giving of bacon* altogether ceased. Thus did he deprive the men of another "*custom*" as old as the Bible itself.

He considered that, *because he paid so great a proportion to the poor rates*, the poor were indebted, chiefly, *to him*, for a subsistence; and, when a useless poor person died his family made it a matter of rejoicing. In one instance there was an idiot who could not be made to do any thing for a living: she was young, and likely to live for many years. She, however, suddenly died; and, when this family heard of it, they openly exulted, being unable to suppress their joy.

Now, I am about to show you how the vengeance of God, against evil doers, is made manifest. Soon after the mother had joined her children, in celebrating the death of that *poor woman*, she, herself, actually *died in the very same manner*; and was not allowed even a moment to bid those children adieu. Her husband had just succeeded in routing an old farmer out of a famous farm, and, when she was called to her account, she was in the act of inviting her friends to a *feast*, that they intended to hold on taking possession of that man's house. She was boasting of grandeur, and riches, and preparing for the day of rejoicing at her neighbour's downfall, when, to use the language of Job, her candle was put out, and destruction came upon her.

Again, in a neighbouring town there resided an unjust, parson magistrate. He could not have been less than seventy years of age! He had an excellent living; ought to have been satisfied, and rather to have put away childish things; instead of which, he had a wild notion of being heir to a title; and went to law, to obtain the same, borrowing money, to carry on the suit, from any body that would lend. The banker's assistant lent him a few hundreds of his ill-gotten pounds; and, ever after that, it was in vain

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for the poor villagers to complain, or to appeal to the laws of their country against their tyrant's proceedings, whose family used to *boast that, right or wrong*, they should be, as they were, sustained.

At length, however, there arose a panic among the parson's creditors; which, with difficulty, he weathered, till the villain, to serve whom he had administered so much injustice, thought it expedient to put in his claim. This, most of all, unkind demand could not be satisfied. The parson was arrested; every effort was made to raise the money; but, without success; and the time arrived when the body had to be delivered to the gaoler of the county prison. The post chaise entered the large doors that concealed greatness from the vulgar gape, and was soon at the hall steps, waiting to receive a load of fallen pomp and vanity. The eyes of the whole town were upon the house, anxious to see the result. When the last moment came, he begged to be allowed to go into his study to write a few lines to a friend; this granted, he locked himself in, and soon was heard the report of a pistol. - I think I was the first there, except those of the house, whom I found hammering in the panels of the door. This done, we entered, and beheld the prisoner sitting upright in his chair, he was insensible, and the flesh of his hands and face quivering; the frail tenement having received so dreadful a shock in letting out, with such rapidity, the vital spark. A little blood was seen trickling from one of his eyes; which was found to be the entering place of a ball, that had passed through his brain. And, though one report only was heard, he had fired two pistols, at the same instant; the contents of the other, actually, passing *through his heart!!!* "Thus did the wicked fall by his own wickedness." Thus did the bribed loose his life, and the briber his money. "Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked." "He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved; for I shall never be in adversity." But you see, that it is no matter how secure in their riches, or power; they never are out of the reach of the wrath of God. "How are they

brought into desolation, and in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terror." When looking upon the convulsed body I could not help thinking of the following words of Shakspeare's, in the prayer of Henry the Sixth, over the expiring remains of Cardinal Beaufort:

"O thou eternal mover of the heavens,  
Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch;  
Oh, beat away the busy meddling fiend  
That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul."

The particulars of his death were never published. The venal press, all subservient to the great, dare not say any thing more than, that, he died at his own house, and that he was buried in the "chancel." It could, however, give a particular account of the death of a poor boy, of fourteen years of age, the son of a disconsolate widow; which happened, in the same town, a short time before. For me to relate this story will be to digress; but, for you to know the circumstances of his death, and what happened, subsequently, to those who visited his dead body with vengeance; may be, and I trust will be, of use to you; that it will teach you to believe, and trust in him whose eye ever seeth the deeds of your oppressors. And I trust, too, that it will warn those above you, whenever they have, as jurymen, or in any way, whatever, to do with the scales of justice, to see that they are equally poised. *That the same shall be weighed out to the rich, as to the poor; to the high, as to the low.*

This boy was the servant to a Doctor, who had cruelly used him; and, rather than endure such treatment, he chose to "run away from this world's ills:" taking enough of poison to effect his purpose. But, before he was cold, stiff, or had lost the colour of his cheeks, his master, still in wrath with him, insisted upon having him sent to the church; where he lay, for two or three days, without any further change. The tyrannic master pursued him after death with as much malignity as he had done before; and nothing would satisfy him but a verdict of *felo de se*. So

the body, still with signs of life in it, was put into a hole, in the high road, and had a stake driven through it; being the only case of the kind that I ever knew; which shews the unrelenting character of those who had the management of it.

This Doctor had a family: and, soon after he had sent the unshrouded body of the poor boy to be mangled, and thrown into a hole in the road; soon after this, he rose one morning to behold one of his daughters, a beautiful girl, of, about, I think, eighteen years of age, suspended by the neck to the balusters. Here, again, was the vengeance of God inflicted upon a family for their oppressive conduct towards the poor. But, what will you think, when I tell you, that a jury, composed, principally, of *the same men that sat in the case of the boy*, sat also in this case, and that they gave a verdict that entitled the body to christian burial. The feelings of *her family* were paid the greatest respect to. To which, *I do not object*, but, *I denounce from my soul, those who wrung the heart of the poor widow, the mother of the boy, by an opposite conduct.*

No reason could be given, why the body of an illiterate, orphan boy, of only fourteen years of age, should be, thus, treated; and why the body of the girl, so much older, of a superior education, and never having been known to be otherwise than sane, should not have been treated in the same manner.

Then, after this, comes the case of the rector; the spiritual teacher, of that place, till the last moment of his life. And, not only so, but was the chief magistrate, whose word was, frequently, the law. Of course, one of the most learned, and, as such, he did all things that a man could do to get out of his difficulties. Not until every thing had been tried did he resort to the pistols; which, as shewn by the evidence, were loaded ready, and intended for the last expedient. There never was a case more clear of *felo de se*, yet the jury, and again, principally composed of the same men, decided otherwise, and he was interred in the chancel!! A place allotted for those of the most select. It never, I dare

say, entered the heads of the coroner and jury, to throw the body into a hole in a cross road, and to drive a stake through it. Do you think it is not the greatest of all mockery to talk of there being a just God in the heavens, if such partiality as this, among his children, were to go unpunished? *It does not go unpunished.* "Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon the earth, that the triumph of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment."

The family of the unjust parson magistrate, and the family of the overbearing Doctor, are gone!! Not a soul of them, or their offspring, are, in those parts, to be seen. They are "scattered as the stubble that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness." And thus, sooner or later, it ever has been, and ever will be with the wicked: whether individuals or nations. If a nation in its government departs from the paths of rectitude, becomes voluptuous and tyrannical, that nation is as easily chastised as is the simple individual. He who directs the whirlwind, can, and will, as sure as that the sparks fly upwards, punish the guilty; dwell they in cottages, or dwell they in palaces; be they few, or be they many. And, now, I will close this letter; trusting that the truths, herein set forth, will have shewn you, clearly, the horrid effects of *paper money*, or, of *oppression growing out of paper money*. Not a place has escaped its effects; nor a person its influence. And, fortunate has that village been, which has not, from the same causes, suffered to the extent of the one that I have taken as an example. I have always opposed, to the best of my strength and ability, the doings of this wicked "era;" and as I draw near to my end, I rejoice the more and more for having done so. Let others do as they will, it never shall, with truth be said, that the infernal contrivance for cheating you, whether in the hands of Whigs, Tories, Radicals, or Democrats, ever found support or countenance from him who thus writes to you, and who, (as many can testify,) has had every opportunity to revel in the spoil obtained by such means.

March 23rd, 1842.

## LETTER XI.

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MY FRIENDS,—I cannot pass, unnoticed, the proceedings of a certain set that have lately crept into the world calling themselves “Tea-totallers.” This ridiculous word has become so well understood that it needs no explanation. I should not have noticed the senseless creatures here, but, in the village where I am writing they have just now, for the first time, opened their budget, and there is nothing talked of but their abominable foolery. They are holding meetings at the *Dissenting Chapel*, where some approve; and, groan out prayers for its success, and the next minute, with more consistency, stamping their feet and clapping their hands, as they would at other mountebanks, calling upon all sorts, even upon those that we should consider *sober women*, if their conduct, on this occasion, did not convince us to the contrary: calling upon them, administering “the pledge” to them, and even to little boys and girls, of five or six years old. While another part of the audience are quite as ridiculous in their condemnation. Making “the place of worship” worse than a bear-garden. It is a curious fact, and one that strikes me as something extraordinary, that, that Chapel, *lately erected*, should happen to stand on the *very spot*, where, so many years ago, the villagers, by way of *protecting the Church, against intruders*, burnt the effigies of the devil, and of Paine. The origin of that business was not founded in truth, it was deceit, hypocrisy, it was intended to blind us, while they fastened upon us their new, and infernal contrivances: *it was not of God*, therefore, it did not stand; and, hence, all these wild things grew up, one after another, *even to this*, which is a branch of the new philosophy, and must be treated accordingly. In the first place, let me tell you, that no man is more opposed than I am to tippling, to losing your time at a public house, and paying six-pence a quart for that



which is, frequently, no better than poison. *Six-pence* will buy a pound of good meat; and, who will dispute, that, that will do a man more good than *a quart of such ale*? I am, however, for arranging matters so that the malt and hop duties could be taken off, and so that every labouring man could brew *his own ale*, at two pence a quart, or less, as he formerly did.

Can it be supposed that the giver of all good things intended them only for the idle? When I am doing no bodily labour I do very well without strong drink; but, when I work I stand in need of it; and, *my reason tells me that I ought to have it*, and tells me to loathe and detest, as the most ignorant of all creatures, the *practical*, tallow-faced “tea-totallers.” Surely there can be none of you such dolts as, *by choice*, to be “tea-totallers”; and to believe that the scheme is any other than part and parcel of the general system to grind you down to the condition of the poor Irish. They who first projected this plan are they that daily get drunk upon wine; they cannot, much longer, do that, unless they can make you contented to drink water; which, I trust will never be the case, and that you will always consider it right to “*eat and drink in due season for strength and not for drunkenness.*” For my part, I am no drunkard, as every one who knows me can testify; but, I take to myself no merit for this; because, I never had a desire to be so, therefore, I sacrifice no pleasure by pursuing the path of sobriety. I have, by no chance, tasted of spirituous liquors for many years. I take, now and then, a glass of ale, or of wine, as it comes before me; but frequently, for weeks together, I take of nothing of the kind; and am, no doubt, though no professor, much more of a “tea-totaller” than the *originators* of the scheme. But if I go into the field, to work, I have soon a desire for a draught of ale. And, Mr. Buckingham, with all all his prate, will never make me believe, that, *in such a case*, water is better than ale; any more than he could make me believe that potatoes are better than beef. By the by, I wonder that they have not, before this, began to lecture upon the necessity

of your *abstaining* (for the good of your *health* and *strength*) from all sorts of animal food, or any thing else, except that *nourishing root*.

This is what they mean, *eventually*, to do, and nothing prevents them from now doing it, only the belief that you are not, at present, prepared to receive the doctrine. I have often wondered, and I now ask, if any one can inform me, why all this excellent, tea-totallizing, advice, is addressed to the poor? Why their souls, and bodies, should be thus regarded, and not the least anxiety expressed about the rich? "They that tarry long at their wine, they that go to seek mixed wine." They may, by dissipation, destroy their health; send their souls to hell; and not a single Buckingham will give them a lecture on their evil ways. After the chase, they are still allowed, unmolested, to enjoy

"— The smoking sirloin, stretch'd immense  
From side to side; in which, with desperate knife,  
They deep incision make, and talk the while  
Of ENGLAND's glory, ne'er to be defaced.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then sated *Hunger* bids his brother *Thirst*  
Produce the mighty bowl."

Ah! *they* may, and they do pursue their sports and pleasures according to the *customs of their fathers*, and never, in the least, attract the notice of the *Great Philanthropist*. Surely common sense must admit that, if eating and drinking be injurious to the workers, it must be infinitely more so to the idlers. But as there is no objection made to their having what they like, I have only to set this matter right with respect to the labouring man; and what can I do better than refer to Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher, who tells us that "there is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour." And again, "a man hath no better thing under the sun, than, to eat, and to drink, and to be merry." And, that the Preacher may not be misunderstood, about the *kind of*

*drink*, that he means, he further says, “go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy *wine* with a merry heart.” We might recite numerous other passages to the same effect; but, I trust these will be all sufficient to prevent your giving ear to the arguments of those, who would, if they could, feed you at rack and manger.

But, while I am defending good living, for the labouring man, **MISTAKE ME NOT.** There is not a man existing that looks with greater horror, than I do, upon the endless evils that flow from gluttonous feeding; and from habitual drunkenness.

March 27th, 1842.

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## LETTER XII.

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MY FRIENDS,—I have, in a former letter, noticed the enclosing of the fields. That *avarice* and *oppression* did not take place till after the banking and funding commenced. When, however, it did take place, the rich, in those days, knew that it would be a sore grievance to the poor; and, to make some amends for the sacrilege, they left, in the *first enclosures*, the lanes and the greens very large. But, like other robbers, as they progressed they became hardened in iniquity; and they took more and more, till now, when an enclosure takes place, not a foot is left more than is wanted for the roads. And, further, some plundering paper kite tyrant, in *every village, of old enclosure*, is taking, or has taken possession of the land, that was thus left. What will you think when I tell you that the lanes and greens of my selected village, and, indeed, many of the roads, are enclosed, and sold by the brother of a banker? These two brothers, the one a banker, and the other a lawyer; when I was a boy lived with their father, an Innkeeper, in a small town: and had it not been for the “new era” they would have thought themselves lucky enough, if they could have succeeded him. One, however, became a banker, and

made as much money as he wanted out of paper ; with some of which, doubtless, he supplied his brother, when that brother bought the manor farm of that village. Would that the day had perished wherein it was said such a purchase was made, and such a new species of nobility created. The first thing he did was to turn into money the beautiful rookery that had so long added charms to that hospitable hall. In a few years the place could hardly be recognized, such terrible havoc had been made. *Bank notes*, however, had made it *his own*, and "he had a right to do as he liked with his own," but the inhabitants, who venerated every tree, could not witness the destruction, and reflect *on former days*, without feelings of regret, mingled with contempt for the taste of the *new era* gentry. Well, after he had sold every tree that was worth falling, he fastened his lacerating talons on the beloved greens and lanes!! Called them his own!! and sold them, in bits and slices, for what he could get ; leaving not enough even for the gypsies to pitch their tent upon. I blush, when I tell you this, to think, that they had not spirit enough to serve him as Moses served the Egyptian. When they remonstrated against the daring robbery, he told them that there was a *law*, that *gave to the lords of the manor*, all the *waste land* ; and that he was doing no more than he had a right to do. He called it *waste* to let those who do all the labour have, for their use and enjoyment, that *small portion of land*. Granted, that there is such a *law*, though, evidently, there is no such thing, or, at least, *was no such thing*, until the usurpers became powerful enough to *make their own laws* ; for, if that land belonged to individuals before the enclosure, is it likely that they would have left it for a future lord of the manor to claim ? No! they left it for the poor men's geese, as a small compensation for having deprived those men of the pasture that the "custom" of ages had given them for their cows. But, granted, that there is a law of the kind, and what does it show ; no other than this, that *never*, until *bank notes* had debased the hearts of mankind, did the world furnish a

wretch, sufficiently hard-hearted and avaricious, to take advantage of that unjust law. This man was the unfeeling lord of the manor to whom Fox once compared Pitt. He rioted in the riches acquired by rigorously asserting claims. When I go into the village, I find that he, and the banker's assistant, have, together, so ravaged it, that it is hardly to be known as the same place. No traces of the greens are to be seen. If I ask where are the places allotted for the sports? The answer I get is: alas!! we know of no sports. And the gloomy appearance of the questioned further assures me of the fact. So much for the "new era" lord of the manor.

"The fault is great in man or woman,  
That steals a goose from off a common;  
But, who can plead that man's excuse,  
That takes the common from the goose?"

March 31st, 1842.

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## LETTER XIII.

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MY FRIENDS,—You will remember the venerable parson that I spoke of in my eighth letter to you. He has, long since, been removed to the world of spirits; and who do we find in his place? Before I answer this question, I will take a glance at the conduct of his successors, down to the present incumbent. Know, then, that the good old man was the last that administered under the dignified order of things. When he fell, the Church itself fell, as far as regarded that village. He died soon after the *new era* commenced, which *era* furnished a fresh parson every two or three years. We used to say that it was the Bridgwater canal, just then finished, that brought the swarms of parsons. That they were dropped by the way-side as the boats passed through the country. The reason why we got that into our heads was, they seemed always bound from the north. The fact, however,

was that money had been made so abundant that thousands of upstarts, of one kind or other, who before had no idea of their children ever being able to live without work, now educated them for *parsons*; and when they were finished they tramp about like other journeymen, in search of a job. They succeeded each other faster than the excisemen did; and, of such a sort, that one would have thought they could have been begotten by none but the d—l himself. It was rare to have one that was not continually drunk, and beyond which they seem to have had no further desire.

But, where, you will ask, was the bishop that he did not keep in better order the worthless curates? Ah! the "new cra" had bewildered him, too, and had turned his attention from every thing but the sweet, and all enchanting notes of Abraham Newland.

The banker's assistant, who, as I have said before, was always churchwarden, used to shrewdly tell, of a piece of cunning, that he once practised, with success, upon the bishop. There had been a complaint made of the dilapidated state of the Church, and the bishop, came to see about it. "Now," said the churchwarden, "I knew that if it was repaired, more than one-half of the expenses would fall to my lot, and when I was informed that he was coming, I fixed upon a plan to make him forget his business. There were around the glebe lands some fine elm trees; I told him those trees would make a *great deal of money*; I saw his eye light up in a moment, and he instantly set about to devise means to turn the trees into cash; forgetting the Church, about which, not another word was said. And, instead of my having to pay for repairs, I got a new waggon worth £40, from the wheelwright, for bringing him, and the bishop, together to make the deal for the timber."

And were the parishioners satisfied, you will ask, with such spiritual teachers as those? No! many became disgusted, and abandoned the Church, for new modes of salvation; while others

considered themselves let loose from all restraint, and forgot that they had souls to be saved.

The best parson I ever knew, among the new litter, was scarce ever sober, and I have been in private company with him when he has been so top-heavy as to fall out of his chair, overset the table, decanters, jugs, and glasses; and has swilled the room like a sty. But to do him justice, he was charitable; and, in many respects, a better man could not be found. Another we had who was equally drunken, and good for nothing, in any respect, except that he had a "good delivery." He use to say, in his drunken bouts, that he would preach, drink, or box any parson in England, for a hundred guineas. He preached at three places, two or three miles apart, and he would invite some of the young men to walk with him, and to stop at the Inn, till he returned from "*doing the duty*." I once made one of the party; and, never, at any other time, did I witness such a carousing. We stayed till daylight the next morning; and, among other scenes, in the course of the night, there were two or three fights, in which his reverence took a very prominent part, and was implicated in making a match for two boxers to fight for a prize the next day.

His successor, like the rest, was continually drunk. So besotted, at times, as to be an object of sport for the rest of the village tipplers. In one case they had him at an Inn, to which, there was an orchard thickly set with young trees; the night was very dark, and the rustics got up a match for the parson to run another old drunken fool round this orchard, for a gallon of ale. The parson was about six feet high, and his opponent, not more than two-thirds of that height; he, therefore, avoided the boughs, and won the race with ease; while his reverence got entangled, his face scratched, and his clothes torn to pieces.

At another time they invited him to a fishing party, and, giving him plenty of ale, he soon became drunk. They, then laid him on the bank of a muddy place in the brook: and when asleep, rolled him in.

This they called *fun* ; but, *mind*, I do not tell it to you as such. I tell it to you, to shew you, what depravity, a few years of licentious government, may bring to a nation ; and, what are the consequences of such licentiousness, to *you in particular*. I trust that you will never look upon scenes like these, in any other mood, than that of serious reflection, as to what *they must, in a national point of view*, eventually lead. I take no pleasure in relating these things or I might say more of the same tenor, but it is not my wish to go beyond what appears to me to be necessary, to cause you to see clearly the effects of the “ new era.” I will therefore notice no more of the doings of the parsons, except those of the present incumbent, who, some years ago, purchased the living ; and, I am sorry to have it to say, that, instead of his being the faithful shepherd, and of taking care that our “ customs were rendered to us,” he was the very first to sanction the cutting up of our greens and lanes ; of which, he took to himself every convenient lot. Thus, helping to remove, instead of to protect, the “ landmarks which our fathers had set.” And, besides this, soon after he became in possession of the living he, like the *Lord of the Manor*, discovered a law, so obliterated by time, I suppose, that none but a parson could read it. This law gives to the church, *as he said*, a right, not only to the large tithes, and glebe lands, but also to, what he was pleased to term, *the small tithes*. Now, the large tithes consisted of a tenth part of all the grain and the hay that was grown in the parish ; which together with the glebe lands, could not have been worth less than six or seven hundred pounds a year : and which, *in catholic times*, as we find in the canons of the church, was to be disposed of in the following manner :

“ Let the priest set apart the first share for the buildings and ornaments of the church ; let them distribute the *second* to the *poor and stranger, with their own hands in mercy and humility*, and let them reserve the third part for themselves.” *Mind*, it does not say that these shares are to be equal. It would have been



unreasonable and unjust, as well as *useless* to the parson himself, to have done so ; for, how could an *unmarried* man expend, on himself, a share equal to that of all the poor in his curacy ; but, I will here depart from justice, and from common sense, and construe this law so that the parsons should have an *equal third share* ; and then, I humbly ask, the clergy, by what means they become in possession of the other two shares, for any other purpose, than those expressed in the ancient law ? Presuming that this question will put them to their trumps for an answer, and not being desirous to hurry them, I will pursue my narrative and give them time to consider.

When the flock, (since the "*blessed reformation*," ) had manured and cultivated the land ; found the seed ; reaped and mowed the crops, got them into shock and cock, ready for pitching upon the waggon, then, before they could further proceed, they had to give notice to the tithe man, so that he might come to stick green branches from the hedges or the trees on every tenth shock and cock. Was not this a pretty fair allowance to the parson ? Remember every item of the expenses were paid in getting the crop, and that he was put to no further trouble than that of drawing it home FOR HIS OWN USE, for they have shuffled the poor out of their *third*, and saddled the *ornamenting* and *repairing of the church* on the parish. There were between four and five hundred people in that parish, all the children of a just and impartial father, that has *no respect to persons*. Well then, agreeable to his equity and justice, the parson ought not to have had more than an equal share with the rest of his brethren ; yet, monstrous as it must be thought, they suffered him to take a tenth !! This had always been received by his predecessors as it ought to have been, in a becoming manner. But *he*, had a taste *peculiar* to the "*new era*," for making discoveries, he found out a *law*, that gave him a *right*, to take not only what I have stated, but also the tenth pig ; goose ; duck ; hen ; pail of milk ; egg ; apple ; plumb ; gooseberry, currant ; and, in short, of every thing, that the land

produced, and that had not before been tithed. So here we have another system of "*grinding by extortion*," such as old time, in that place, *had never known before*. Christ told the young man that, to obtain eternal life, he must sell all that he had and give the products to the poor. Not a farthing, for this *greatest of objects*, did he recommend to be reserved for the parsons. Why then should we suffer ourselves to be thus imposed upon, till we are reduced to starvation; witnessing daily the dragging in carts of our aged friends and acquaintances to the horrid workhouse where their days are numbered.

Having to speak thus, of this gentleman, is grievous to me. I am, in gratitude, indebted to him for some very kind acts; and had he been free from the things that I charge him with, I know of no man more fit for a clergyman. But, I owe a duty to the subject, on which I am writing, that will not suffer me to pass, unnoticed, improprieties in him any more than in the rest. Particularly acts, that, I believe, to be so very pernicious to every one over whom he is shepherd, and to whom he is continually preaching in favour of *contentment*. How could he, himself, although living in such abundance, have been *contented*, when he made his new claim, and contended with the parishioners until he obtained it? Except in the case of the *Lord of the manor*, who bid him defiance, and thus protected *his farm* from any more of the curse than a mere nominal payment; which, for the sake of appearance, was agreed upon. While all the rest are groaning under the grievous burden. Thus, instead of approaching his new flock with the olive branch in his hand, he came, as the villagers have it, with a lawyer upon his back. He will, I hope, believe that, what I here say, is out of respect for the church, to which I belong, and I assure him that I should be exceedingly happy to see her ministers *defenders of the poor; seeing that those in need and necessity have right*. Free from avarice, themselves, and from every thing that is not consistent with brotherly love and christian charity. Were it so we need stand in no fear of a

change in the "established church." But, if every thing, *contrary to this*, is to daily increase; then, no matter how soon we are restored to the real "holy catholic church." In the event of which, may God, in his mercy, grant that England may be as happy as she was when that was before her religious establishment; and when the priest for a maintenance, like that of his flock, considered it his duty to watch and pray by the afflicted: to hold public worship every morning before breakfast; to instruct the youth all the day long; and to devote his whole time and means to the welfare of the people. Good God! what a change since the days of catholicism!! It is but a few weeks ago that the "by law established" parsons of the neighbourhood in which I am writing, were voting for one of themselves, who, for shepherding a small parish, has, already, of tithes, glebes, and one thing or other, nearly, if not quite, a thousand pounds per year, they were voting that there should be another annual salary, paid to him, or to a curate, **OUT OF THE PARISH RATES**, for visiting the sick of a district workhouse, situated in the same town as is this man's living. What! take an oath that they are moved by no worldly motives; but purely by the Holy Ghost to take upon them the cure of souls, and yet refuse, while holding all this money, **THE ORIGINAL PROPERTY OF THE POOR**, *to give to such poor a few prayers, without further payment?* If this be allowed it is enough to make every man, but the downright sensual, or senseless, turn from the church with horror and disgust. "But," say the parsons, "these poor people, though now in the same parish, are not all of his flock." Indeed! then he cares nothing for souls out of his flock!! Nor for those that are in, I expect, except they bring grist to the mill. Why, (setting aside all religion,) such a man cannot have a hundredth part of the sensibility described, by Sterne, when he speaks of the roughest peasant that traverses the bleakest mountains, finding the lacerated lamb of another's flock.

Christianity, my friends, is based upon charity, love, and

affection towards our fellow creatures ; and, be you assured, that when you behold those that make riches their God ; those that add field to field, and house to house ; and that fare sumptuously amid their starving brethren ; caring not who sinks, so that they swim : such, though ever so full of cant in behalf of *the Church*, are no christians. Take you the bible in one hand and the testament in the other, and examine such characters, by either, or both of these books ; and you will soon find that they are far more like devils than christians. Can that parson be a christian, who is surfeited with luxuries, and yet refuses, without further reward, to *pray* by his poor brother or sister, because, he or she is not of *his flock* ? If he were a christian, he would not only willingly and freely do such duty, but he would consider it a pleasure, he would take with him his wine and his oil ; and he would remember the sayings of Christ, to the impudent lawyer, who asked whom he was to consider as his neighbour. The Samaritan did not deem those only entitled to his love and kindness who happened to have been born within the *boundary of a parish* ; but he had compassion on the stranger, and bound up his wounds ; pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an Inn, and took care of him. And did not Jesus himself go about to all the cities and villages, healing the sickness and every disease among the people ? He commanded his disciples to do the same, and to provide neither *gold nor silver, for themselves*. And let us see how St. Paul obeyed his commands. In committing his flock to the elders, he said these words :

“ And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them, which are sanctified.

“ I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel.

“ Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

“ I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.

“ And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

“ And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck, and kissed him,

“ Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.”—*Acts. 20th chap.*

To call those *preachers of the gospel*, whose souls are bent upon nothing but money ; is, if I judge correctly, to be guilty of blasphemy in the highest degree. Christ took up the cross, bore all sorts of persecution, and knew no pleasure but the pleasure of doing good. “ And the disciple,” said he, “ is not above his master ; nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.” Well, if this be enough, what are we to think of these parsons that are conniving at wickedness, and planning means to add to their mountains of mammon ? How such ministers of the gospel ; but, stop ! we profane the title, by applying it to them. How such men can put on a face to read the scriptures in church, where they affect to believe that the eye of God is upon them, is truly astonishing. There we see them, exhorting us to give up, cheerfully, the fruits of our labour ; to be *satisfied* with our miserable lot ; to remember the sufferings of Christ ; of John ; and of all the Apostles. Shewing us how hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, and how much we ought, therefore, to hate and detest the things of this world. Yet, the very next day, like vultures allured by the scent of their prey, they are to be found, voraciously, hovering over a workhouse ; spying out any further picking that may be left on the bones of its wretched inhabitants. Surely such beings can be no other than those that Christ speaks of when he says.—“ O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things.”

You have now read a brief account of the doings of the parsons. They are it is true, of late, reformed in some respects, they attend to their churches better than they did ; but their love of lucre seems much on the increase ; and *never, at any time*, did they take from their flocks any thing like what they now take. They effect this by a variety of new slight of hand contrivances,

and while their sheep feel the unusual pressure in vain do they seem to turn their simple heads about in search of the cause. The clergy were, since my remembrance, forbidden, by law, to engage in any kind of business. Their representatives, in parliament, have, however, thought it proper to repeal that law; and, now, instead of devoting their whole time to the curing of souls, and to the exercising the duties of hospitality, as their oaths and their livings required, they are turned farmers, bankers, railroad makers, presidents, directors, and shareholders in insurance, and other companies, dealers, truckers, chapmen, and, in short, concerned in every gambling scheme that can be got up for the closer shearing of their flocks.

When you think of these things, you will not be surprised at the people, now, paying tithes, *great* or *small*, with reluctance; or that the clergy have been obliged to obtain a law for the *commutation* of the thing, by way of keeping its deformity, as much as possible, out of sight. Nor can you be surprised at any thing that may happen to a church, the clergy of which, are engaged in these abominable things. This *commutation*, or, chopping and changing law, has, however, done great good, in having convinced those who had any doubt upon the subject, that the *tithes are public property*; and, that, if the clergy continue to go on, as they have done, it will be soon necessary to take out of their hands, that which they are no longer deserving of, or fit to be entrusted with; and to apply the same to other, and better purposes.

April 3rd, 1842.

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## LETTER XIV.

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MY FRIENDS,—I have, hitherto, related, principally, what has come under my own observation; this is the sort of knowledge that enables us to judge of human affairs. “What can we rea-

son but from what we know?" My selected village was, before the *new era*, England in miniature, with respect to the manner in which the inhabitants obtained their living. And, if I were to say that, in that respect, it was the civilized world in miniature, the assertion would be supported by the bible itself.

I will now make an extract from a work entitled, "*PAPER AGAINST GOLD; or, the History and Mystery of the Bank of England.*" Which bank commenced in 1694; that is, 148 years ago, in the following manner:—

"King William III, who came from Holland, had begun a war against France, and wanting money to carry it on, an act was passed (which act was the 20th of the 5th year of his reign,) to invite people to make voluntary advances to the government of the sum of £1,500,000. And for securing the payment of the interest, and also for securing the re-payment of the principal, *taxes* were laid upon beer, ale, and other liquors. Upon conditions of £1,200,000 of this money being advanced, within a certain time, the subscribers to the loan were to be incorporated: and, as the money was advanced in due time the incorporation took place, and the lenders of the money were formed into a trading Company, called 'THE GOVERNOR AND COMPANY OF THE BANK OF ENGLAND.' Out of this, and other sums borrowed by the government in the way of mortgage upon the taxes, there grew up a thing called the *Stocks* or *Funds*."

Now, you know the origin of the curse. The next thing is to shew you, from the same authority, the increase of the debts, taxes, and poor's rates since that time.

When QUEEN ANNE, who succeeded William, came to the

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|--|---------------|
| throne, which was in the year 1701, the debt was.....      | £16,394,702.  |
| When GEORGE I. came to the throne, in 1714, it was,.....   | £54,145,363.  |
| When GEORGE II. came to the throne, in 1721, it was,.....  | £52,092,235.  |
| When GEORGE III. came to the throne, in 1760, it was,..... | £146,682,844. |
| In 1810, it was, .....                                     | £811,898,082. |

The expenses of the nation advanced as follows—

In 1701, ..... £5,610,987 Peace.

|             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1714, ..... | £6,633,581. Peace.        |
| 1727, ..... | £5,441,248. Peace.        |
| 1760, ..... | £24,456,940. War.         |
| 1784, ..... | £21,657,609. Peace.       |
| 1801, ..... | £61,278,018. War.         |
| 1809, ..... | £82,027,288 5s. 1½d. War. |

I have no statement of the further progress of the expenses ; but, I believe that, before the end of the war, they amounted to one hundred and twenty millions annually !!

At first the bank issued but few notes, and none under *twenty pounds*. In 1755, it issued *fifteens*. Some years after it issued *tens* ; and, not until the year 1793, did it issue notes so low as *five pounds*. Remember, that there were no bank notes in England but those of this bank. In 1797, the bank broke, and the *government protected it from the demands of its creditors*. A law was passed to *force* the people to take the notes of the bank in payment for debts due then, and to become due ever after. And also to justify the said company in keeping all the gold, with them deposited, belonging to the government and to other customers. For this gold they paid *with their paper ; thirty shillings worth, of which, it took to buy a guinea*. So that, by that one trick only, they cheated all who had to do with them out of about one third of their just demand. This wicked contrivance needed and had the support of laws, that continually swilled the sewers of Newgate with human blood. It having been considered an offence, *worthy of death, in others*, to imitate the said great system of fraud. Millions of two and one pound notes, were then, for the first time, issued. And country banks sprung up in every market town, flooding the whole kingdom with their promises to pay, in notes of the said broken bank. Then it was that the pockets of the banker's agent were filled to overflowing ; and the devastation of the village commenced in earnest. The *real money*, (for which men had to work, or to give *something of value*,) was gone. The inventors of machinery encouraged and rewarded *with bank notes*, until they had superseded the hand-loom ; the



knitting of stockings ; tumbled the spinning wheels into the dark garrets ; set aside the hand churn ; the flail ; the fan ; the hand draining ; and the hand hay making. Then the poor man's cow was driven from the commons, the open fields, the greens, and the lanes, his pig from his sty, and his fowls from his roost. Then his pewter plates, and brewing utensils, were sold. The cottage oven done away with. The oak table removed from the farmer's kitchen. The group dispersed from under the elm. The sheep shearing ended. The hills ceased to echo back the shouts of joy from the last load of harvest. The songs of gratitude were heard no more. For the last time, the tabor was unstrung ; the shrill pipe became mute ; the morris bells ceased to jingle ; the quoits and the skittles were thrown aside. Under the spoiler's axe the may-pole fell, and the very place on which it stood was grasped by the tyrant's hand. Then the farmer and his wife forgot their occupations, and entered on the path that led them to pride and extravagance ; and, frequently, as a just punishment, to poverty and ruin. And then the labourers, as a natural consequence, became dissatisfied, careless, and malicious ; driven round the parish, as *paupers*, to work for whom the overseer thought proper ; their labour disposed of at a married and an unmarried price ; and a price according to the number of their children. Then the tread-mill was introduced for the punishment of those who deviated from the slave driver's will in the slightest degree. Then the Irish, for the first time, came prowling over your fields ; and, at potato wages, reaped down your harvest. Then the yeomanry cavalry mounted their horses, to trample into the earth the broken hearted if, in their distress, they dared to complain. Then the church was neglected. The drunken parsons commenced their career. Then, too, the laws were discovered ; the one by the *new Lord of the manor*, and the other by the *modern parson*. And then the canters and ranters, came into the village to set husband against wife, and wife against husband ; and to make a distracted race of those who come under their spiritual instruction.

I did intend, in the closing of these letters, to give you

a list of heart rending cases under the new poor law. If these cases were published together, they would form a more frightful picture than has ever been exhibited in England. My intention for doing this was that you might compare these with other days : but when I consider that it is you that suffer the grievance, I see less necessity for getting such list. I will, however, give you two cases ; which having been proved in the courts of law, will be quite sufficient to shew the desperation that men are driven to in consequence of this law.

The first is, the separating of man from wife and children. And the other, the murdering of children by their father, (through dread of the workhouse,) in the parish of Basford, near Nottingham. The mother was dead ; the father was a labourer, described as a man of kind disposition and character, and *noted for his attachment to his children.*

#### POOR LAW.—SEPARATION.

“A man of the name of Stapley made his appearance before the magistrates at Lewes, accompanied by the governor of Arlington workhouse.—Governor. I am governor of Arlington workhouse, which belongs to the Hailsham Union. I have been governor of the workhouse three years and a half. It is now an union workhouse, appropriated for women and small children. The wife of Stapley is in the workhouse, and is supported by the parish. I have to complain of John Stapley. He has been to gaol, and came out a week ago last night. He came to the workhouse to see his wife, and said he could not go away, that he could not be separated from his wife and child. Before he went to prison, when he was confined a fortnight, he was permitted to see his wife, but he had no order to that effect this time. He came in the workhouse, saw his wife, and has stopped there ever since.—Mr. Partington. Why did you not turn him out ?—Governor. I was ordered by the guardians not to do any thing upon my own responsibility, but that I must apply to them. I told some of the guardians that Stapley refused to go to Hellingly workhouse, which was set apart for men and boys, as he did not like to leave his wife and family, his wife being very heavy, and one of his children ill. When I applied to the Board, Mr. Hawley, the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, told me to take him before the Lewes Bench this day. Stapley has given me no abuse, and I have given him no victuals. I believe the women gave him part of their food. He slept with his wife.—Mr. Scott. Did you show him the order of the guardians for his removal to Hellingly workhouse ?—Governor. I did, and he said he did

not like to leave.—Mr. Partington. Why do you not go back to Hellingly?—Stapley. I have no objection to go back to Hellingly, if my wife and family are permitted to be with me. I find there is accommodation afforded to others, and why can't I be made comfortable?—Mr. Partington. You must really go back to Hellingly.—Stapley. I cannot go there, really, unless my wife and family are permitted to accompany me. I hope, gentlemen, you will take my case into your consideration. Think, gentlemen, of having a child two years old very ill, and a wife perhaps not an hour to go, and, being four or five miles off from them, not permitted to see them from week's end to week's end! Take the case to your own breasts, gentlemen—take the case to your own breasts. (Here Stapley shed tears,) How should you like it, gentlemen—you who love your wives and your families, dearer to you than yourselves? Put it to your own breasts, gentlemen—week after week to be separated from them, and under such circumstances. Stapley was going on, when—Mr. Partington said to the governor, if he comes back to Arlington, turn him out of the house: and if he uses any violence, apply to a constable.—Stapley. No violence need be used.—Mr. Partington. If you resist, you will break the peace.—Stapley. Is this the law of man to separate wives and families, or the law of God? It is the law of man,—not the law of God.—Mr. Partington. It is the law that those who cannot support themselves will be provided for, if they behave themselves peaceably.—Stapley. I like work; I like my wife and family, and enjoy their company; I do not like to be separated from them; and I put it to you whether, under such circumstances, you would like to be separated from all that is dear to you.—Mr. Hoper. You are only hurting yourself by using this language; you must submit to the law, or, if not, you must take the consequence.—Stapley. I will submit to the law of God, in this instance; but I cannot to the laws of man: men may destroy the body, but they have no power over the soul. I can tell you, gentlemen, that, if I have my liberty, I shall go back to Arlington.—Mr. Partington. After these exclamations, we shall call upon you for sureties to keep the peace.—Stapley. I can get no sureties.—Mr. Partington. Then you must take the consequence.—Stapley. What am I to do for work when I come out of prison?—Mr. Partington. If you cannot get work, you must abide by the regulations of the union.—Stapley. I had been out of work three or four month. I worked in this town eighteen years, and was carried to Ifield parish by an order. Many a man commits felony, and is sometimes imprisoned for fourteen days only, and sometimes discharged on his trial; but I, whose only crime is poverty, am obliged to submit to a prison. It appears that if a man love his wife and family, and sticks to them, and is poor, he is liable to go to prison. (A voice among the spectators—"About right, too.")—The magistrates said, that if these observations were repeated in court, they should be under the necessity of clearing it.—Mr. Partington. The magistrates don't wish to be severe; and they are willing to accept your own recognizance of £10, which will be forfeited if you force your way into the Arling-

ton workhouse.—Governor. May he come to see his wife and family, ?—Mr. Partington. He may be allowed, I have no doubt, under existing circumstances, to see his wife at reasonable times ; but must not remain in the house.—Stapley. I shall not break the peace. Stapley then entered into the required sureties ; and Mr. Partington told the governor that if Stapley should persist in seeing his wife against the order of the Board, he had better gently hand him out ; but if he found him resist, he might call in the aid of a constable to remove him. The governor, after the case was decided, asked if he was compelled to take Stapley back to Arlington ; he feared, from what he heard, that if he did he should have some trouble in keeping him away from the house. The magistrates told the governor that he was not compelled to take him back ; but if he chose to give him a ride to help him on his way, he might do so. During the hearing of this case the back of the magistrates' room was filled with labourers."

#### THE MURDERING OF CHILDREN BY THEIR FATHER.

" Thomas Greensmith of Basford (the murderer) having been cautioned by the coroner, said: I live in the yard next to this house, and Mr. Mark Woodward is my landlord. I went on Monday morning last to hedge on the farm of Mr. G. Brown, at Bestwood Park ; I remained there all the day, and returned home in the evening about seven o'clock. When I got home, I took something to eat, staid in the house about half an hour, and went out to the Seven Stars public house, near the Leather Bottle, Nottingham, where I had a cup of ale. I then returned home. I walked alone the whole of the way, and reached Basford between eleven and twelve that night. I met Mr. Joseph Woodward (who is the father of Mr. Mark Woodward, my landlord) in the yard ; he asked me about the rent, and I told him I had arranged with his son to pay it the next Wednesday but one ; he told me he would have it the next morning ; I told him it was impossible for me to give it him next morning, but he should have it in the course of the next week ; he said he would not be put off in that way, and if I didn't get it ready in the morning, he would take my goods. I thought if he took my goods, that I should have no house—no where to go to—no home, nor nothing—and that before my children should be turned into the street, and be separated from me, I would suffer what the law would please to clap on me. [The prisoner here paused, and it was very apparent that great emotion was passing within his bosom, but after he had answered two or three questions, he resumed and described to the jury in the most minute detail, and with the greatest composure, as follows :—

" Coroner—Did you turn your housekeeper away that night ?

" Prisoner—I told her she must go ; and I intended her to go out and not stay there that night.

" Coroner—Did you go up stairs as soon as she was gone ?

" Prisoner—No. I was not willing to part with my children, so I made up my mind to strangle them, and I did it with my handkerchief.

" Coroner—When did that idea first come into your mind ?

"Prisoner—Not till that night—after talking to Mr. Woodward. I did not proceed up stairs immediately after my housekeeper left. I staid in the house place about an hour—I then went up stairs, and went directly into the children's room. I think some of them were awake, but I don't know particularly. The threat that Mr. Woodward gave me caused me to do what I did. There were two in one bed and two in the other. I think I took my handkerchief out of my pocket when I got up stairs, but don't know where. I went to the bed where the two youngest ones were lying, (Mark and Ann,) I think they were awake at the time. I kissed them all, shook hands, and bade them good bye, before I destroyed them. In less than a minute after I got into the room I began; I took the youngest (Mark,) first, I twisted my handkerchief a bit and put it round its neck, and tied it in a fast single knot. I drew it tight but did not pull it at all afterwards; I then left hold of the handkerchief.—[The prisoner, there is little doubt, in his agitation, drew the knot of the handkerchief in the first instance across its mouth, as it bears marks on its lip, and its tongue is bitten.] I had a candle with me in the chamber; I stood in the chamber, but I do not know that I looked at it while it was strangling; I believe I did not look at it. I kept the handkerchief on its neck five minutes. I then took it off, and the child appeared to be dead. I did not see that it bled at the mouth, as I did not look at the face. It did not scream. Never a one of them ever winced. I went to Ann next, and tied the handkerchief round her throat in the same way. When I had throttled Ann, I went down stairs and staid against the fire for a few minutes. I stood considering; and thought I might as well suffer for them all as for two.

"I then went up stairs again, and was going up to the bed where the other two lay (the bed under the window, in which John and William, the two eldest boys, were,) when William jumped out of bed, ran across the floor, and got into the bed where Ann and Mark lay, which is the cause they are all in one bed. I thought he had seen me strangle the other two. As he ran across the floor, he said; "Pray, father, don't do me so." I then tied the handkerchief round the biggest boy's neck (John's); I did not look to see if John struggled, but went and sat down on the bedside against William, and said to him, "My lad, we'll all share our fate; when I've done you, I shall have nobody to think of but myself, and it will be my turn next," and he never spoke more. They none of them ever winced, and I will take my oath never cried out. I then went and took the handkerchief off John, and tied it round William's neck. When I took the handkerchief off John's neck, he appeared quite dead. William made no resistance; if he did it was the least in the world, as I gave him no chance, and he never screamed at all. As soon as I had tied the handkerchief on William's neck, I went down stairs, where I staid for more than an hour; I then went up stairs again, and sat on the bedside where William, Ann, and Mark lay, till about five o'clock. I then took the handkerchief off William's neck, and put it in my hat; this it it, (taking a cotton handkerchief

out of his hat and holding it up to show the coroner). I shook hands with them all, as I thought it would be the last time I should see them, and started.

"Coroner—When you destroyed the children, had you any idea of destroying yourself?

"Prisoner—No. I knew I should be taken in a day or two. I know I shall have to suffer what the law will inflict upon me.

"Coroner—How old are you, Greensmith?

"Prisoner—Thirty-five.

"This closed the case, and the jury immediately returned a verdict of "wilful murder against Thomas Greensmith."

"The prisoner was not in the least affected by this verdict, but, on the contrary, as soon as he had delivered his testimony, his countenance brightened up, and he appeared more cheerful than during the examination of the other witnesses."

There needs no comment on the above horrid cases, they speak too plainly for themselves; but, it becomes you to think of their causes; and I, sincerely, hope that what I have written may assist you in doing so. Great events are hovering over us; the jarring elements are clashing against each other; may you, therefore, be sober, thoughtful, and ever ready, among the rest, to assert your rights; asking for nothing that is not strictly just, and putting up with nothing, if you can help it, that is wrong. Always acting in such a manner that will enable you to rely upon the justness of your cause. "Let all the ends you aim at be your country's, your God's, and truth's." Then you may have hope in him who does not always give the battle to the strong. "I," said David, "have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree:

"Yet he passed away, and, lo, he *was* not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."

Those that oppress you, are now, quarrelling among themselves. When their ever increasing numbers were within bounds, and there was plenty to feed the whole of them, then, *with them*, all was well, and they had only two questions to guide them. The one. What can we do to serve ourselves, and each other? And the other. What can and will the people endure? But, now that the supplies fail, they begin to snarl at each other like hungry dogs over a bone. There are the Debt Lords; the corn

Lords; the cotton Lords; the sugar Lords; the rail road, and other chartered companies, all intending to be lords in their turns, and all contending about who shall have the good things that you produce. The task masters have become so numerous that it is impossible for you to feed them. So the laws of nature, which the Malthusians threatened should drive you off the land, are now driving them to plunder each other. God seems to have given them up to their own heart's lusts, letting them follow their own imaginations, as he did the Israelites; and, not only so, but, is turning his hand against them. "Their foot shall slide in *due* time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste."

And, now, my friends, I bid you adieu, beseeching you never to forget, that, nothing, ever, generally, disturbed the good old 'customs' of England, until the coming of *paper money*; and that no sort of reform can ever benefit you, until that, for one thing, is finally destroyed. The notorious Henry VIII, and his wicked supporters, took the glebes; the tithes; and so on: turned the disabled and infirm out of their monasteries; broke up the hospitals, and left the poor without any thing to depend upon, in sickness or in age; but, they did not deprive them, by machinery, of earning a living, when *able to work*; nor did they cheat them out of their hire by *false balances*, and *deceitful weights*." The services of the labourer, at sufficient wages, were always required. The deprivations, however, in those days, were, as we have seen in letter the first, great enough to cause them to insist on a restoration of their property, or of something in lieu thereof equally valuable. *That thing* was the *lawful title to a living out of the land*; which, to some extent, you yourselves enjoyed until a "REFORMED PARLIAMENT" wronged you of it, and set an alarming example to all those who look to the law for the protection of their rights. For, if an act of Parliament can *annul your title*; I see no reason why another such act, cannot *annul any, or all other titles*.

April 7th, 1842.

# LETTER I.

## TO THE NOBLEMEN OF ENGLAND.

MY LORDS,—I have written several letters to my suffering countrymen, on matters that, I think, deeply concern them ; and I write this to your Lordships on matters that, I think, deeply concern you. Of these letters I intend to make a little book ; the readers of which will find that my motive for doing this must have been for the public good, and without any consideration as to whom I should, in particular, please or offend. Not having spoken, as the Indians say, with a forked tongue, but in a straight forward Old English manner, turning neither to the right nor to the left to see who might be looking on.

I am, from what I have seen in other parts, in some anxiety about the effects that I expect will finally ensue from the present mode of administering the government of my native country. A government that, when in its purity, was, for excellency, as I believe, unequalled by any in the world. But, curses have crept in and sapped the foundations of its institutions ; till, one after another, they die away, and, in their places, spring up things that are new, and things that are *destructive to liberty and happiness*. One of the principal of these curses is the Bank of England, which led the way in cajoling the crown out of its most important prerogative, took from the people their standard of exchange, and left them to the mercy of extortioners. Our fore-fathers never would have believed it possible that their descendants would ever become so senseless as to give to a company of men the right to make the money of their country ; and that, too, out of *paper and ink*. Is there a despot or tyrant to be found that would not, *for this*, exchange all other privileges ? What cannot a company obtain, if, at their pleasure, their own bits of paper are to pass for money ? That bank, and its brood of other banks, have made us all, from



the highest to the lowest, their slaves. It is they that put the price on labour, and say what the bread we eat shall cost.

Some attribute our troubles to one thing, and some to another. Some think that the cure might be found in universal suffrage; vote by ballot; and, annual parliaments. I am not of that opinion, for various reasons; one of which is, that, nobody ever speaks of England as having been, until of late years, any other than the happiest of countries. Another reason is, that, the United States of America, have *all the above named things*, and yet they are labouring under the same complaints. Some speak of "cheap governments," and charge our burdens to the expenses of Monarchy, Peerage, and Church; without recollecting that England had these things in the best of her days, and that, *while in their purity*, they worked in an admirable manner; and without recollecting that the republic of North America has none of these things. I am opposed to the corn bill, because, I know that it is founded in injustice, and has been carried on in deception; but I do not agree with those who expect complete relief in the repealing of it; because, America cannot be affected by any duty laid on the importation of corn. She being an exporter of corn and flour. I might speak of many things that she has, and that we have not; and of many that we have, and that she has not; all of which, would go to show, that, it is not to the original form of government, in either case, that we ought to charge the oppression that now prevails. We are, therefore, forced to look for a *cause* that is *common to both countries*; and, that we find in *paper money*. America, in many respects, has, of late, suffered the most. She is afflicted with a lawless, lynching, spirit, that threatens to lead to the most frightful of things; and this the more confirms the fact; she having used such money to a much greater extent than has any other country. Three or four years back provisions were dearer there than they now are here, but owing to the paper money machine being, for the present, out of order, provisions are cheap; and, in that respect, *at this time*, the

workers have the advantage over those of the same class in this country. But there is no protection there for life or property, as I have shewn in a work lately published, by Longman and Co., Paternoster Row, London ; entitled, " America as it is, &c. &c." In that work I prove, beyond contradiction, that all is disorder, and at the mercy of mobs, whose conduct soon convinces every man, that arrives there in search of liberty, and happiness, that

" It is not sands that make a waste,  
Nor laughing fields a happy clime ;  
That spot the most by freedom graced,  
Is where a man feels most sublime."

Formerly a man who dared to coin money, or to pass that which he knew to have been coined by any other than the King, was, as a traitor, put to death. But, now, whole companies, of coiners can, with impunity, make as much bad money as they can put off.

Let me not be understood to involve in this guilt every man engaged in banking. Many may be excused on the score of their knowing not what they do. Their profession is sanctioned by law ; and hence, without searching into the fact, they conclude that it must be right ; forgetting that law, sanctions gambling houses ; brothels, and abominations in too great a number for me to set forth ; but, none that I know of, the injury of which, to the people, is half so prodigious as banking with such kind of money. And this, upon calm thought and serious reflection, they, themselves, must see, if they will not acknowledge. For my part, I would as lief, and rather, hold shares, or that my children should hold shares, in a gambling establishment, where cards and dice are used, as where, for the same purpose, bank notes are used. And where one person, engaged in either, prospers to the end, fifty die wretched deaths. The more they get the more reckless they become, till their extravagant way of living, or some ill judged speculation, plunges them into ruin.

On landing in the United States of America, many years back I presently saw what must be the consequences of being

governed by bankers: and I was the first, at least that I know of, that publicly condemned their craft upon the same principle as I would condemn that of any other robbers. There were some, for party motives, opposed this, and that, of the banker's proceedings; but all justified the *system*, provided it was "properly managed." Meaning, that it should be so managed as to let themselves into the profits and keep others out. Just so it is here, with those who exclaim against such as the late Middlesex Insurance company, on the ground that its members were not *respectable*. One of them, we are told, was a broken down lawyer. And what objection, permit me to ask, could there be to him? Surely a more fit and proper character could not be found to manage the gambling affairs of a joint-stock company. Another was guilty of having been a blacksmith. Another a discarded footman. Another a schoolmaster, and so on. But, be what else they would, they were, evidently, *enterprising* characters, (such as the world seems so exceedingly fond of,) or they would not have emerged, with such rapidity, from so low a degree to that of keeping their carriages. They were men no doubt, that encouraged the "vast improvements," and, before their unfortunate failure, were considered as gentlemen. Shall we treat them then with disdain merely because their project turned out unmanageable, owing to the suspicious multitude, against whom, when fairly waked up, the bank of England itself has been tried and found wanting? As to their characters, I am greatly in error if there be a joint-stock company to be found, that does not contain similar characters. I never knew one that did not exhibit such, when the covering was removed, and they were fairly exposed. And, *why should it not be so?* If such things are to be *sanctioned by law*, such *law*, in equity and fairness, ought to be open to us all.

As to a *bank*, I hold it to be impossible for a bank that issues paper money, as a "circulating medium," to be founded in any thing but *downright fraud*. Unless it be prevented, by law, from

issuing any more notes than it has *at all times*, gold and silver to pay with; and, unless that gold and silver be watched, night and day, by an unbribable government guard. In which case there would be no inducement to issue paper at all. Their charters, therefore, allow them to issue, I think, three pounds in paper, for one that they hold in specie. And, how much they exceed this law, *every day's experience convinces us*, THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF KNOWING.

The following is a statement of their money affairs. Upon the correctness of which, I place not the least reliance; but, let us see, *if we can*, how they stand, according to their own *account*.

#### PROMISSORY NOTES AND BULLION.

“An account of the Average Aggregate Amount of Promissory Notes payable to Bearer on Demand which have been in Circulation in the United Kingdom, distinguishing those circulated by the Bank of England, by Private Banks, and by Joint Stock Banks, in England and Wales; by the Banks in Scotland, by the Bank of Ireland, and by all other Banks in Ireland; and of the Average Amount of Bullion in the Bank of England, during the Four Weeks ending the 5th day of February, 1842, pursuant to the Act of 4 and 5 Victoria, cap. 50.

| ENGLAND.         |                 |                    | SCOTLAND.                                | IRELAND.         |                                | Total.           | Bullion in the Bank of England. |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Bank of England. | Private Banks.  | Joint Stock Banks. | Chartered Private and Joint Stock Banks. | Bank of Ireland. | Private and Joint Stock Banks. |                  |                                 |
| £.<br>17,402,000 | £.<br>5,532,524 | £.<br>3,068,901    | £.<br>2,922,882                          | £.<br>3,279,075  | £.<br>2,531,039                | £.<br>34,739,421 | £.<br>5,602,000                 |

“HENRY L. WICKHAM.”

“Stamps and Taxes, February 18, 1842.”

In the first place. What do they mean by *Bullion in the bank*? Bullion, is gold or silver, neither wrought, nor coined. And when they are talking of their notes, and of their means to pay them in gold, why do they not speak of their *sovereigns* also? The reason is, they think it better to trust to our imagination to fill up the vacuum; and the fact is, that the *Bullion* includes all they have, coined or not: so that they have out, at this time,

above three pounds, in promises to pay, for every pound in real money that they have to pay with. The other banks say nothing of their *Bullion*; they do not pretend to have any; nor do they *require any*, being sheltered behind the wicked law, that (in their case,) still makes Bank of England notes a legal tender.

The notes now afloat, (by this account,) amount to £34,739,421, so that, taking them altogether, they have out above six pounds in paper, for one that they hold in *real money*: and the borrowers know that such paper money is not obtained for less, *on an average*, than six per cent. per annum; and, six times six are thirty-six. That is, thirty-six pounds do they get INTEREST ON EVERY ONE HUNDRED POUNDS, IN GOLD OR SILVER, THAT THEY POSSESS!!! Their annual tax, then, upon this devoted country, is TWELVE MILLIONS, TWO HUNDRED, AND TWENTY-SIX THOUSAND AND NINETY ONE POUNDS, ELEVEN SHILLINGS, AND TWOPENCE FARTHING!!! For, if we allow them what till lately was, lawful interest, 5 per cent. per annum, for their "*Bullion*," that would amount to £280,100, which when taken from the interest of their *paper*, leaves the above enormous amount.

There are many grievances from which we suffer; but when we look at this, and then turn to the fundholder's, pretended, *direct* claim upon us, we despair, at once; and, are without hope, from any other source, than the uprooting of these cancers.

Then there is, what the Americans call "*Shaving*." That is, taking as much interest, by divers tricks, *contrary to law*, as can be wrung from the necessitous borrowers. These things I shall pass; and, suppose that they keep to *the law*; to the *unjust* and *most abominable law*; and what then do they do? God has most solemnly denounced usury, *in any form*, but, it seems never to have been foreseen that a state of things so cruelly unjust as this could ever become enrolled among the oppressor's wrongs. Here are usurers allowed, *by law*, to take interest, for that which is of no value; depending, entirely, for its success, on the credulity of the defrauded. And, what is most to be feared, is, that there is no

peaceable way of shaking off this bondage; for, if these money makers possess an influence, and it appears they do, to form a majority in the Parliament, then we are in the exact situation as Sir Matthew Hale had in his eye, when he remarked that "The Parliament being the highest and greatest court, over which none can have jurisdiction in this kingdom, if by any means a misgovernment should any way fall upon it, the subjects of this kingdom are left without all manner of legal remedy." But Locke explains the matter clearer, and says that, "*All power given with trust* for the attaining an end, being limited by that end, whenever that end is manifestly neglected or opposed, the trust must necessarily be *forfeited*, and the power devolve into the hands of those that gave it, who may place it anew where they shall think best for their safety and security. And *thus the community* perpetually retains a *supreme power* of saving themselves from the attempts and designs of any body, even of their legislators, whenever they shall be so foolish, or so wicked, as to lay, and carry on designs against the liberties and properties of the subjects: for no man or society of men, having a power to deliver up their *preservation* or consequently the means of it, to the absolute will and arbitrary dominion of another, whenever any one shall go about to bring them into such a slavish condition, they will always have a right to preserve what they have not the power to part with: and to rid themselves of those who invade this fundamental, sacred, and unalterable law of *self-preservation*, for which they entered into society."

Now, My Lords, I fear that these remarks apply very near to the present state of this country. It may be said that these privileges were granted by the representatives of the people; but, the truth is, that the people knew little or nothing about it, until now, that they so severely feel its consequences. Granted, however, that they did know, and were willing to surrender such rights, I deny that they had the power to do it; and that any person, or persons, except our sovereign, can have a right to make

the money of our country. For, if both sovereign and subject were bent on their own destruction; and to effect the same, were determined to grant such privileges, they have not, *the power to part with their own preservation*. If the people were fairly represented, and were to agree that the business of their members of Parliament was to grant charters, *one to another*; why, then, they would willingly, but temporarily, part with their own preservation; but, if, without their consent, the members were to do this, then designs would be carried on against the liberties and properties of the people. How these matters have, of late years, been carried on, is glaring enough, and we have arrived at such a pass, that our very dwellings, as I shall hereafter shew, are not secure for a day together. And if a youth, serves his apprenticeship to a trade, and expects that, like his forefathers, he shall have no other obstacle thrown in his way for obtaining a living by it, except that of equal competition with others in the same business, he soon finds himself deceived, and is overwhelmed by a chartered company; that, *frequently make their own money to trade with*. Then, besides these, there are individuals that are a sort of jackals to the bankers, with whom no man, that trades on his own real capital (unless it be very large indeed) can contend. Honest men desire no law or advantage that does not extend to all of their country; those that desire these things flock to the banks, whose best customers are men who have nothing, of their own, to lose; and who are reckless about driving on trade, getting into debt, and finally cheating all that trust them, *except their patrons*. Such men are called "*enterprising men*," and the bankers know the concerns of these men better than they know them themselves, and bring them to anchor when they see them in danger.

Let any man enquire when he hears of the failures that daily take place, among those who owe their thousands and tens of thousands of pounds; let him enquire into the matter, and, nineteen times out of twenty, he will find, that, they have been mere

providers for the bankers, who have sacked most of the plunder. And when the insolvents have settled their affairs, by paying a shilling or two in the pound, their *Patrons* employ them again, and so on: until age wears out their *enterprising* faculties, when, they, like other hacks, less deserving of such treatment, are frequently cast to the dogs.

I have, for years, narrowly watched and studied to comprehend the craft of banking: and, (*professing to understand what I am talking about,*) I here declare from my soul, as I hope to be saved, that I know of no other wickedness: no tyranny: no oppression, of any kind, nor of all kinds put together, the horrid effects of which, are felt to so great an extent, as are those of this contrivance. As an illustration to what I have said, I will here imagine a case of banking, which shall resemble justice ten times more than any thing I know, or any one else knows of, belonging to the present system, and, after all, shall be no better than highway robbing. A gentleman shall possess estates, the lowest value of which, *under any state of things*, shall be two hundred thousand pounds. He shall become a banker, and issue notes to that amount, and *no more*, promising, and *effectually securing*, the holders by consenting that, should they become suspicious, and, he unable to pay, in any other way, each of them should, at once, and without any law proceedings, take of the land to the amount of his notes. "Dear me" the gudgeons will say, "surely nothing can be fairer." Fairer! you stupid creatures! is it fair for a man to get *three rents* for his land? That is, three per cent. for the land itself; and six per cent. for the notes; or in other words, for the shadow of the land? By this contrivance, or sleight of hand trick, does he not swindle the country out of TWELVE THOUSAND POUNDS, PER ANNUM; or, out of that which would maintain 461 poor families, at ten shillings per week each? The whole consisting, (say five to a family,) of 2305 souls!!! "A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight."



This, then, is my opinion on banking. From the evils of which, *I pray* that your honourable house will try to deliver us. But, if it should so turn out, as some are afraid it will, that this, and the funding system, which are twins, have eaten too deeply into your hearts, suffer me to call your attention to a proverb, and a more true one the bible does not contain—It is, that “the wicked are snared in the works of their own hands.” I do not, however, for my own part, believe that you, *in a body*, can be concerned in practices, the *inevitable tendency of which, is, to raise the scum to the top*, or “to make the worst of mortals emerge to honour.” And, finally, to bring you under those who, (to use the words of Job,) your fathers would have disdained to have set with the dogs of their flocks. Your *true interest* is to hold with the working people, against the *new race*, whose purpose it is to live by trickery; and, to take your estates with one hand, and the earnings of the working man with the other.

I am, My Lords,

Your obedient and humble Servant,

THOMAS BROTHERS.

April 10th, 1842.

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## LETTER II.

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MY LORDS,—A few remarks on the doings of the bankers, of the United States, of North America, cannot, I think, fail to have a good effect, in helping to clear away the mist that seems to bewilder the eyes of my countrymen. My desire is to make these matters so clear, that the “wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*”; and, that none, who are hereafter caught in such traps, shall have reason to complain. For my ability to thus instruct them, *in this one particular branch*, I can refer with confidence, if not with pride, to the part I took in the great battle

waged in the said States between the banks and the people. President Biddle against President Jackson. Biddle, declaring on the onset, that "one or other should fall; that it should be a battle of absolute destruction, and that the struggle should be final." I, then, wrote a letter to Daniel Webster, the Bank Senator, in answer to his proposal for rechartering the Bank; and for protecting the "credit system." That letter was circulated in every part of the union, and did, as I have reason to think, some good. It exposed, in a common sense manner, Daniel's sophistry, which, afterwards, appeared very ridiculous to tens of thousands, who had, before, looked with reverence and astonishment upon the learned manner in which he delivered his extraordinary doctrine.—Among which, he spoke of the delusion, that has now exploded, in the manner I told him it would explode, and brought into downright contempt, every project that he has upheld for these last twenty years. He spoke of that *delusion* in the following words.

"Credit is the vital air of the system of modern commerce: Gold and silver was, certainly, a great advantage beyond simple barter; but credit has done more, a thousand times, to enrich nations, than all the mines of all the world. It has increased consumption by anticipating products; and it supplies present want out of future means."

And then he went on with such a string of absurdities that surely never, before, came from a head that, for knowledge, is so *beautifully* and *fully* "*developed*," as to become, in model, an ornament for a shop window, having been selected, by the Yankee phrenologists, as a perfect specimen of all that is great, sensible, and good.

"Bank notes" he told us, "brought nations to know each other—They excite and cheer on labour to the utmost stretch of its sinews—Enable men to fight—Prevent men from hoarding—Extend every where and touch every thing. They belong to the history of commerce and of liberty—They brought the people to a state of intelligence and prosperity. A Bank of England could not have existed in the time of Empson and Dudley, although it has now brought about a perfect day in England."

Thus he went on, finally calling upon his party by all means,

fair or foul, to protect the system. In doing which, they spent one hundred millions of paper dollars, in bribery ; and they succeeded in increasing their banks, from three hundred, to one thousand, and their notes tenfold ; by which means millions have been wrung from the working classes ; and, at last, the stockholders, God be praised, have "fallen into their own snares," and are, most of them, reduced to poverty. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap." The United State's Bank Stock, that the senators, who duly received their wages every night, for upholding, and for "eloquently," but deceptively shewing that it was the richest and safest bank in the world. "There is not" said Senator Mc. Duffie, "a bank in all the world that would have stood such an attack. The Bank of England would have fallen under it." And while he, and such as he, in 1834, were telling them these things, I was telling a meeting of thirty thousand men, that, *that* and all the rest of their banks, were insolvent. And calling, most earnestly, upon the honest working community to guard against them. Senator Clay, urged the people "to *expel the Goths from Rome* for having removed the public money from the United States Bank, and put it into a bank here, and a bank there, in regard to the solvency of which we know nothing." "Just as much" said I "as we know about the bank, the solvency of which you are hired to advocate ; and which will cut a figure *equally miserable with any of the rest, in the day of settlement.*" The late intelligence, from that quarter, indicates that the contest is nearly over ; sufficiently advanced, at least, to *confirm my opinions*, and *predictions*, relating to it ; and to *falsify those of the Senators*. Shall I, then, for modesty's sake, hesitate to set up my judgment against the judgment of men like these ? Who, either *must be ignorant in the extreme*, or *extremely wicked*, to palm designing tales, upon their unsuspecting countrymen, for the purpose of leading them into error and ruin. For, we now see the stock of that *United States Bank*, the managers of which, used to roll its cags of money, or of something that they called money,

daily about the streets of Philadelphia, on drays, for the purpose of making their dupes believe, how immensely rich they were. Now, we see the *stock of that bank*, that sold, for years, at, from 128 to 130 dollars per share, is not worth one cent; and would fall below nothing if it were possible to do so. And, as a finishing stroke, the stock-holders have been trying to commit Biddle, their president, to a "solitary cell," for having CHEATED THEM; as if the avaricious wretches could expect any thing else, from a being whom they, themselves, but a short time ago, rewarded with a service of plate, valued at twenty thousand dollars, for his successful services in *cheating* every body else. In opposing which iniquitous proceedings, I, at the "Great Meeting," in 1834, said these words—"Much is said about the blessings of paper money, *discounts*, *accommodations*, and the like, but, be it my task to show, that these things are the greatest curses that ever scourged a nation, and that if the whole of them are not, speedily swept away we shall be the most miserable people upon the face of the earth." For saying this, and things of the same tenor, I should, that day, have lost my life, but for the resolute conduct of my friends, who stood by me, and bid the cowardly ruffians defiance; many of whom have, since, blowed out their own, and each other's brains, in despair. And I have lived to see, that had my advice been adopted, and theirs rejected, we should never have heard of that lawless spirit, that has now become so frightful.

Again, in writing to the mechanics and working men, I used the following words:—"Have nothing to do with *saving banks*, lest they should prove, in the end, to be the greatest delusion that ever made its appearance among men. Take you the earliest opportunity of turning your money, be it little or be it much, into silver or gold; keep it, regardless of the interest, until the storm is blown over." In less than three years, from that time, every bank in the union broke; or, what they call, "suspended payment," which, in plain English, is, keeping the money deposited with them, and refusing to redeem their notes, with which

they had bought up every thing that was to be sold!! How trifling does the baseness of all other robberies appear when compared to this. It was on beholding of this that my opinion changed as to the capability of men of twenty-one years of age governing themselves: seeing that *there* they had all the right that equality could ask for, and yet were, by bribery and flattery, made to passively submit to the pack-saddle, as if they had been beasts of burden. Seeing this, how could I do otherwise than conclude that, for want of experience, they lacked the necessary wisdom to guide them in the paths of security and happiness?

Wise men have had their purses drawn from them, by the dexterous pick pockets; but there is a whole nation plundered, time after time, and makes no attempt to bring the robbers to justice. In no age, but this, did a people live that had the power in their own hands, lawfully as well as physically, and that had every thing that a kind God could give them to make them happy, yet, who crouched at the feet of a knot of villains that sent poverty into every man's house, (but those who belonged to their craft,) and caused rioting, firing, bloodshed, and eternal confusion, among them.

I have, however, the satisfaction of knowing, that, by my continually urging my warnings on their attentions, I saved a few poor men from the wreck; and I now call to mind one, as an example, he was an aged man that had abridged his weekly comforts for *fifty years*, in hopes that his scanty savings might, in the end, amount to enough to maintain him when no longer able to work. Fortunately, in 1837, he fell in with one of my warnings as to the dangers of *saving banks*, and he paid me a visit to inform me that, by the above means, he had saved, for old age, eight hundred dollars, which he had in a *saving bank*, the *capital* of which was *five hundred thousand dollars!!* and the newspapers assured him that the managers were the *most respectable* of men, and what he wanted to know, was, whether, in my opinion, *such a bank* was not, with safety, to be relied upon.—“No,” said I,

"go you *instantly* and give notice for drawing out your money ;" he took my advice, and when he had got it, he seemed uneasy about future interest ; " never mind about interest," said I, " so that you have got the principal in *hard money*." " No," said he, " they gave me a cheque on the United States bank, and I have the notes of that bank, *surely* they are as good as gold or silver." " Why you stupid fellow," said I, " that bank is not a jot better than the rest, and they will all break in less than a week. Get you the silver without a moment's delay." He did this, and, in three days the saving bank went by the board ; from which he would never have had one single farthing. The other banks lived about three days longer, and then " suspended," a word that, if justice had been done, would have been applied, in another sense, to those guilty of that dreadful robbery.

While I remained in that city scarcely a week passed that the grateful old man did not call to thank me for having saved him and his aged wife from utter ruin, and probably from an untimely death : for human nature is not capable of bearing up against such calamities, and the result is, generally, a broken heart ; or, had they survived the shock they would have ended their days in a workhouse ; one of which having lately been erected in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia to hold, at one time, three thousand victims to that wicked system ; before the commencement of which, in that naturally favoured country, such a being as a *pauper* had never been known to exist.

Now, my Lords, a lifetime spent in revelling on the spoil, taken by such means as I have named, would not have afforded that happiness that the reflection on having rescued that one man and woman from the hands of the villains affords to

Your Lordship's

Obedient Servant,

THOMAS BROTHERS.

April 14th, 1842.

## LETTER III.

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MY LORDS,—We are informed from the “far west” that the governor of Mississippi has disowned the “STATE BONDS:” that his conduct has met the approbation of his constituents; and that, already, some other states have followed this example. Oh! how the “Bondholders” on this side, begin to rave. They talk of honour, and honesty; as if their own professions were not that of the worst of thieves. They appeal to the *constitution* of the United States; as if that *constitution* had not been virtually repealed long ago, by the establishment of their wicked system. They talk of protection from the *supreme court*; as if that court could do its duty without imprisoning every one of them (that came before it) for life, for having defrauded not only the government, but the people individually, out of millions of dollars!!! by bribery, corruption, and intimidation: and, for having brought that once happy country into confusion.

As to those Americans that are now raving about the *sacredness of the constitution and laws*, they were, but a short time back, without appealing to either, taking the lives of their fellow-citizens. The cashier of a bank led on a party to put five men to death!!! The bare thought of the manner in which they did it strikes terror to one’s soul: and the reason given for the bloody tragedy was, forsooth, because the victims were *gamblers!!* At that time, in one of my published letters to the mechanics and working men, speaking of the Editor of “*The New York Journal of Commerce*,” (a leading bank paper) who was quite enraptured with the lynch law, in the case of the gamblers; and, intimated a desire to see it applied to such of that city. “O! mad man,” said I, “what are you doing for your employer? Little do you know of human nature. You must believe that we are blinder than bats, and that our smelling faculties are inferior to those of the meanest of curs, if you think that we shall pass by bankers

when you have put us on the scent for *gamblers*. O no! the people will not be long deluded by the cry of ‘stop thief.’ They now, know that the bankers issue sixteen paper dollars for one that they hold in silver; and that, *at the very least*, they make six per cent. per annum: making 96 per cent. on their *real money*; and, therefore, *gamble* us out of more in a day, than all the other *gamblers* do in the course of our lives.” Such were my remarks on them, in 1835. Retribution has now overtaken them, and, though it may, for *a very short time*, be stayed, it will, assuredly, be accomplished. They talk loudly, of the laws impairing the obligation of contracts; as if the infamous laws under which they have so long since thriven were not of that nature; and, as if, the original laws of that republic had not guaranteed protection to every man from such *tricks* as theirs. Let them turn their eyes to their thousands of chartered privileges, and shew us, *if they can*, that there was ever a chartered company that did not infringe upon the rights of others, and that did not IMPAIR THE OBLIGATION OF CONTRACTS BY WHICH THOSE RIGHTS ORIGINATED.

But, if we want to refer to laws impairing the obligation of contracts, by *wholesale*, we must turn back to the pages of their numerous bank suspension laws. One hour they *contracted* to give us, in exchange for their notes, gold and silver, and the next hour they obtained a law to *force us*, during their pleasure, to keep such notes; and to continue to take them, *or nothing*, for the “SPANISH MILLED DOLLARS” that the CONSTITUTION and LAW had PROMISED TO EVERY MAN IN PAYMENT OF DEBTS.—Glorious Mississippi!! For having been the first to begin at the right end for abolishing this monstrous wickedness. This does, indeed, seem like waking from the trance. May she go on in the best of good works, knock off the galling fetters, and bid the accursed usurers defiance. She must not mind the snarling “correspondents” that are in the pay of the press, which is in the pay of the loan-mongers. These “correspondents” are now



located in every part of the globe as a sort of pimps for their employers. Their fine turned sentences, in favour of honour and honesty, will never convince those whose good opinion is worth having, that the Americans are wrong in refusing to pay "*the Bonds*." Bonds indeed!!! Just as well might thieves bribe your servants to sign *bonds* in your names, and then abuse you for refusing to pay them. There cannot, in fact, be such a thing as a *State Bond*; because, the legislature is chosen every year, and no legislator has, *or can be put in possession of*, authority to bind or to control its successor. He who admits not this, should shew us, without this, a safeguard for the rights of the people; should point out, why a legislature that can mortgage our estates and our labour, by piece-meal, until we can neither stir hand nor foot, and bind our posterity in the same bond, why, if it can, *of right*, do this, it cannot sell us, and our children, at once, for slaves, the same as the usurers did in the republic of Athens, who went so far, and that too, when the *contrivance* was but in its infancy, as to force the poor to sell their own children. "And when it came to that," says Plutarch, "those of the most spirit agreed to stand by one another, and to bear such impositions no longer." So, with the aid and council of Solon, they broke their chains; freed their country; and that without deluging the same in blood.

"Yet who but Solon  
 Could have spoken peace to their tumultuous waves  
 And not have sunk beneath them?"

May a Solon be found to bring to the same happy conclusion the affairs of America. Most heartily do I pray that every State in the Union may follow suit to the lead of Mississippi; by which means, *only*, can they right their heretofore wrong proceedings, render their country fit for an honest man to reside in, and cause republicanism again to assume, her once envied position. Men of sense and property will then haste from all parts to join them; and no debt ridden country will be able to retain a soul that can move, except the fund-holders, who will have to work for their

living, or to eat one another ; and, in either case, will cease to be what they have so long since been, a pest to their fellow men. Now, that the veil begins to rend, all these abominable iniquities will be clearly seen through, and the injured party will be at no loss for arguments to shew the *strict justice* as well as the *absolute necessity* of disowning "*the Bonds*."

I am, my Lords,

Your obedient and humble Servant,

THOMAS BROTHERS.

April 18th, 1842.

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## LETTER IV.

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MY LORDS,—The time is fast approaching when the majority of men will begin to seriously think of the end for which governments were at first erected ; and then they cannot fail to conclude that, that end has been sadly abused. Governments were established under the pretence of protecting the people from violence, plunder, and general oppression ; and, if they do not this, but on the contrary encourage these things, they are a curse instead of a blessing. Laws that favour one more than another lead to the greatest of all calamities, and any member of a legislative body that, *knowingly*, proposes such laws ought, for the offence, to suffer death. When men first agreed to be governed by written, or other laws, it was on the condition that such laws should be founded on equity ; and justly and impartially executed. "Not to be varied," as Locke observes, "in particular cases, but to have one rule for the rich and poor ; for the favourite at court and the countryman at plough." And then he justly remarks that government "is a power that hath no other end but preservation ; and, therefore, can never have a right to destroy, enslave, or designedly to impoverish the subjects." These remarks are

so consistent with common sense that no one will stand up to dispute them, and yet we find that Governments, as *at present administered*, go so far from them as to make *two sorts of laws*, granting *one sort* to the designing men, by which they are protected, while practising divers schemes to get, from others, their earnings. I need not attempt to enumerate the thousands of different ways in which these things are done; but, the first thing is to bargain for the said law. And, of all things, we must keep our minds *steadily on the fact* that it frequently happens that the *same men* are members of the company, and members of parliament at one, and the same, time that the bargain is made. So that, in that case, they are both buyers and sellers. Buying for themselves, and selling for their constituents; and, no ghost need come to tell us which has the best of the bargain. And, further, should they not be able, in their *chartered capacity*, for want of money, to carry out their schemes, they then, in their *characters of Members of Parliament*, levy extra taxes upon, the people, to the amount required, and LEND THE SAME TO THEIR COMPANY!! This is not, indeed, *varying the law*; but it is granting a special law, for one part of the community to plunder the other. And, the possibility of such a thing happening, seems to have been foreseen, by the Lord Treasurer Burleigh, when he remarked that "If ever England was ruined, it would be by a Parliament."

Let me intreat you, my Lords, to think, *seriously*, of these things; and I am sure you will allow that government never could have been instituted for purposes so vile and unjust.

For brevity's sake I will pass over the many other injuries we every hour receive from the hands of the chartered, and come, *at once*, to that of their seizing and taking, *by force*, our houses, gardens, orchards, and farms, when they happen to lay in their way. They will cut up and pull down with as much daring insolence as if they were (as indeed for the present they are) the successful invaders of the land. And these things go on, although the Queen has sworn, in her coronation oath, to maintain the laws

of God which peremptorily forbid them in the following language. "Moreover, the Prince shall not take the people's inheritance by oppression, to thrust them out of their possessions." Ezekiel xlv. 18.

Thus we see that *even* princes cannot, of right, do these things. How then is it that these daring gangs are suffered to do them? They pretend to make reparation and appoint a board, or, I know not what they call it, to put a value upon property marked out for destruction; but, is it possible for men like them to know how, (even if they were inclined to do justice) to value the possessions or inheritances of a satisfied, peaceful family; perhaps, born on the spot, and their ancestors, for hundreds of years, having known no other home?

One instance of this I will here give, just as I read it in a newspaper, of the 22nd January, 1842. "BIRMINGHAM AND GLOUCESTER RAILWAY COMPENSATION.—THE GLORIOUS UNCERTAINTY!!—A court of compensation was held last week, to assess the damage done by this company to the lands of a gentleman named Guest, by interfering with the course of a certain brook. It should be premised that Mr. Guest had been offered £115 by the company; but, estimating the damages at £650, he determined to submit it to a jury, and having obtained the services of Mr. Sergeant Talfourd, with a retaining fee of eighty guineas, and the assistance of a host of witnesses, the court was accordingly held at Northfield, before W. Taunton, Esq., Under Sheriff of Worcestershire, and a respectable jury, when, after an inquiry of about twelve hours, long speeches on both sides, and the examination of witnesses without number, the jury assessed the damages at £100, or £15 less than Mr. Guest had been offered by the company in the first instance. The company's expenses in witnesses, council, &c., were considerable; those of Mr. Guest were upwards of £250. So true it is, that it is 'better to bear the ills we have than fly to others we know

This editor states these facts in a manner, from which, one cannot tell whether he blames the one party or the other; or both; or neither. But he calls the jury *respectable*, which would infer that right had been done, *at last*. And he concludes with that senseless sentence of Shakespear's, according to which, if a man demands my house, I am to let him have it, lest by refusal I "fall into ills that I know not of."

If Ahab had lived in these days he need not have made himself unhappy for want of the vineyard. He could not, UNDER COLOUR OF LAW, force the poor man from his home, so he offered to give him for it, a better vineyard than it; or to pay the worth of it in money. But Naboth refused to come to any terms, for reasons beautifully expressed in the following words:—"The Lord forbid it me, that I should give unto thee the inheritance of my father." This showed a feeling in him that we do not possess, or, certainly, we should not submit to be driven from our homes by a gang of speculating adventurers. The selling of charters had, in those dark days, never been thought of; or, what difficulties it might have prevented. Jezebel had to resort to *murder*, before she could obtain the vineyard. And, may God's vengeance on that occasion, be as a warning to the insatiable cormorants, of this our day. Let them remember that the son of Ahab was slain in the very field taken from Naboth—"Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord, and I will requite thee in this plat." Then, as to the "cursed woman," the Lord decreed that she should be eaten up by dogs, and that there should be none to bury her. And Jehu, at last, beholding her from a high window, said,

"Throw her down. So they threw her down: and *some* of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on horses: and he trode her under foot.

"And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, go, see now this cursed *woman*, and bury her: for she *is* a king's daughter.

"And they went to bury her; but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of *her* hands."—2nd Kings, chap. 9th.

Now, this Mr. Guest, doubtless, possessed the water course by

the same right as Naboth possessed the vineyard, or, as he, himself, possessed his own chimney-corner; which, having now done with *this case*, and speaking of chartered companies generally, had these brigands fixed their minds upon such chimney-corner they would, on their offer for it being refused, have proceeded with charter in one hand and pickaxe in the other, and after ejecting him, levelled his *freehold* with the ground. If he had dared to defend it, as, in my opinion, in such a case, an Englishman ought to do, and death, on their part had issued, he would then have been called a *murderer*, and deprived of his *life*, as well as of his *house*. We have, in former days, heard of private property being, at a fair valuation, given up for *government purposes*; but never, *till now*, were organized bands like these invested with power to drive us from our homes at their pleasure.—No more let an Englishman boast that his house is his castle. Here is an instance, and I do not bring it forward as an extraordinary oppressive one of the kind, on the contrary, it is, by far more mild than many others that I could have used, but it is fresh, and quite sufficient to shew, that, if these things are suffered to go on, there is in England, no kind of property secure from day to day.

Mr. Guest valued his property at £650, and no man or body of men, except the government, and, perhaps, not that, could be put in possession of right to demand it at all; either at that, or at any other price whatever. I can, therefore, see no difference, in the atrociousness of the crime, between this new mode of taking the property of men and that practised by the pirate. And I am quite sure that these things cannot go on without destroying all confidence in the laws, and driving men, whether they will or not, to similar means, for redress of grievances, to those now practised, from the same causes, in the United States, where, when the people were in the act of being some of them forced, others frightened, and others noodled out of their money, rivers, highways, homes, and employment, under the imposing pretence of “Internal Improvement,” of “Iron Bands Uniting Extremes,”

of "Annihilating Space," of "Magic Speed," and, such like foolery, with which they were annually treated by their governors, whose messages never failed to inform them that their country was about to eclipse all others and would soon exhibit the phenomenon of a people being governed without any expense to themselves; as the surplus tolls of the said *improvements* would pay off the debt, and all government expenses. But, instead of these things being accomplished it is now discovered that the said "vast improvements" are a burden and a curse to the state; and, to keep them up, intolerable taxation has been resorted to: nothing has escaped the merciless hands of the improvers. *Household furniture*, and even *watches*, are put under contribution. No man in Pennsylvania can, now, carry a *watch* without paying tribute, and nothing that was ever done by any government surpassed the villany of that system of plunder. When it was going on, I ventured to question the wonderful advantages that were to be derived from it, and, to publish a series of letters to the mechanics and working men, of that country, whom, I very well knew, were to be plucked, and I did all that it was in my power to do to convince them of their folly in huzzaing at the arrival and departure of their gilded cars. I begged of them to consider whether that *improvement* was not a new and a mighty power put into the hands of the "Bills of Credit Makers," that would enable them the better to plunder their country. The thoughtless, however, went on, shouting and approving, as if, to them,

"The pleasure was as great  
Of being cheated as to cheat."

Until the consequences, at last, forced open their eyes; and, with amazement, they found themselves in trammels; from which (although they do not deserve it,) I sincerely wish them a speedy deliverance.

These railroads, both there and here, are got up by adventurers, assisted by the swarms of needy, chattering, pettyfogging lawyers, with whom, (under this new order of things,) both countries un-

fortunately abound. At their primary meetings common sense cannot, for their alluring tales, be heard; and, hence they succeed, *first*, in establishing their schemes, and then in handing them over to the widows, the orphans, the innocent, and credulous of every kind, that have real property to be cheated of. One project got rid of, another is commenced, the last being always the best.

We are told that railroads employ the labourers. This we cannot deny; but, far better would it have been if they had been employed, (as Castlereagh recommended,) in digging holes one day and filling them up the next. The right way, however, to employ labourers is to make them produce something that is useful. Instead of which, these have been as much of a dead weight on the necks of other labourers, as if they had been on the sinecure place or pension list. The drain made, by these roads, on the resources of the country, has been as great, and, before the paper money, with which they have been made, is paid, will be as disastrous, as that of a war with any nation in the world would have been, during the same time. War indeed is a great calamity, it takes from useful employment the best of the men, who have then to be equipped and maintained by the labour of others. Tens of thousands engaged in making, for the army, things that are frequently, never required; or, may be, destroyed in an hour. Where war is no respect is paid to private property, and men are alarmed lest fortune should direct the invaders towards their homes. And, wherein, does this, materially, differ from the waste of labour on railways; from the general havoc and devastation that they spread through the country? And then there is the *slaughter* upon them. Who can tell, since their commencement, the number of our fellow creatures that have, by them, been sacrificed? The gore, brains, and entrails of the victims would, if they could be got together, besmear the rails from London to Liverpool. It is impossible to contemplate the extinction of so many lives without concern; and, though, in this respect, I would



not be understood to say that the number is equal to those that fall in sanguinary battle; yet the horrid deaths and mangled limbs, that we continually hear of, are greater than ever were known to happen from any other scourge except war, plague, pestilence, or famine. Endless are the pernicious views that might be taken of railroads, but, I shall be content with one or two more. A host of industrious families, in every part of the country, can, without any fault of their own, attribute their ruin to these *roads*; and, while they have any means left, have to pay for the support of a government that altogether neglects them, and protects their oppressors. That makes fish of one, and flesh of another. Can any feeling man who formerly travelled on the *King's highway*, between London and Liverpool, and who now travels between those places, upon *railroads*, can such a man fail to regret the absence of those ancient, peaceful, and industrious towns, and villages, all alive with traffic, through one of which, at least, in every hour, he had to pass? The happiness of those places is now, in numerous instances, turned into mourning; and the means, on which their support depended, usurped by a gang who have superseded the *King's highway*, and established a *way* of their own, on which, neither *King* nor *people* can set foot, except upon "the companies" terms; which are such that, *come what will*, no blame is to be attached to them; and no redress can be had: for as well might a poor man attempt to recover damages from the sun or the moon as from one of these *companies*. They are so privileged that they are enabled to *command* the trade, even of those that detest their road. It is, indeed, surprising that, under any circumstances, men of sense will face death in a shape so hideous as to require a watchful sentinel at every pass, on whose strict attention, (barring the bursting of boilers, and some other ill chances,) the fate of the passengers depend. A single error, in presenting their white or blood-red flags, opens the gulph of perdition; and, in the travellers plunge!!! Leaving those to whom they were dear to lament their loss, and the rest

of the mad-brained world to heedlessly pass the tragic spot, without any seeming care or thought as to whose turn the next may be.

I have the honour to be,

My Lords,

Your obedient Servant,

THOMAS BROTHERS.

April 21st, 1842.

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## LETTER V.

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MY LORDS,—No inducement, I trust, other than that of doing your duties, will be necessary to cause you to set your faces against such proceedings as those related in the foregoing letters. Yet allow me to say, that, I think, no class does, or will eventually, suffer more from them than that of your own. The time is already arrived when a president or a director of a bank or a railroad thinks himself as great as a Lord; and the people make little, or no distinction between them. Less and less respect is paid to the nobility every day. The chartered and the loan-mongers will be up with you, if you take your rest but a little longer. It is now common enough to see them residing in the noblemen's mansions, either having purchased, or renting them, and their furniture. Their former occupants having gone abroad, to hide themselves, until they have retrieved their fortunes; or loosened their estates from the Jewish usurers. The other day I happened to be in a mansion of this kind, and it would be difficult to describe my feelings, on beholding the ancient family pictures that adorned the wainscotting. There was the old Lord and Lady—Lord Charles, Lady Mary, the young group, and many that I was not informed who they were: but all, doubtless, of noble extraction. And I could not help think-

ing that they looked as if they were ashamed of their situation. Particularly the old ones, who, in their lifetimes, had never known any thing of bank notes, national debts, and their concomitants.

There is, too, in that house, one of the best private libraries I ever saw ; an accumulation of five hundred years, and the tenant, I should think, never read a book through in his life ; unless it was old Rothschild's Manual : having been bred up entirely to stock-jobbing ; and to know no charms but in the words *scrip*, *consols*, *transfers*, and so on.

It is time, my Lords, for you to think of doing your best to protect yourselves and your country against the further encroachments of this upstart race, to live under whom, when they become racking landlords, is impossible. Their tenants are so ground down that they are obliged to "keep back, by fraud," as St. James said, "the hire of the labourers," till the whole is a mass of misery, such as makes us anxious to uphold the *old fashioned* nobility ; seeing that those who rent of *them*, rent at a reasonable rate, and might, *if they would*, do much towards making all comfortable about them. But they, now-a-days, live in a style very different from that in which their fathers lived ; they, presumptuously, claim the whole *profits of the earth*, which our father hath told us, *are for all* ; and which, no doubt, you intend should be fairly diffused. Where such is the case there is happiness not elsewhere to be found. But, my Lords, you, too frequently, let your land in great lots, and are apt, when a small farm is at liberty, to put it to another already too large ; from this, no good can possibly come, but, on the contrary, is productive of many grievous evils. I know one parish, that, when I was a boy, consisted of ten or a dozen farms ; those farms are now all thrown into one, and the present farmer called a country squire, living at the rate of, perhaps, one or two thousands a year. Now, if that parish was again divided, even into twenty farms, would it not be better to see twenty farmers, with their sturdy boys, at work,

as farmers used to work, all well bred and well fed, so that they might have flesh upon their bones and calves to their legs as their ancestors had, when, as it used to be said, one Englishman could beat ten Frenchmen; a saying that will soon be reversed if this downward course be longer pursued. Would it not be better, then, my Lords, that some of your attention, *at least*, should be spared from the breeding of cattle, and turn to that of the breeding, and condition of men, so that you might be surrounded by powerful bodies and grateful hearts; and so that they might have a country worth fighting for, if again besieged by the "fierce and haughty foe": would this not be more consistent with sense and with safety, than that one man should live in splendour, lording it over all the rest, till they are excluded from almost every thing but air and water? I know all about the arguments in favour of large farms, and think them not worth noticing, believing that none, but a covetous, grasping wretch can desire more than a hundred, or, *at most*, a hundred and fifty acres of land.

There is much clamour for a total repeal of the corn laws, and repealed they must be; for, if they had no other evil tendency except that of encouraging this monopoly of land, that would be sufficient to make them detested by all good men, but, they are in every way unjust, and the feelings of a great majority of the people, even in the *agricultural* districts, are, to my own knowledge, decidedly against them. If there were ten times the number of farmers, the land would produce double the quantity of provisions; care, economy, and emulation, would be re-established, among those who have now nothing to care for; prices would fall, and do away with the necessity, (if such a thing could ever exist,) of resorting to unjust laws for the landlord's and farmer's protection.

But, I am fully aware that the repealing of these laws, bad as they are; or, the increasing of the number of farmers, desirable as it is, will not ease the burden of the people, to any considerable extent, while the debt is in existence. It is the DEBT, as

your Lordships know, that is the *mill stone*, to which, in weight, all other things are trifles. This debt must be cut away before we can ever hope to see the labouring vessel righted; for the farmers, great or small, cannot, with wheat at three or four shillings a bushel, pay debts, or the interest of debts, contracted when wheat was at from fifteen shillings to a pound, the bushel. And a similar argument is equally applicable to the manufacturers.

Presuming, my Lords, that your stations in life afford you but little opportunity to know the real condition of the poor, I beg, before I conclude, to solicit your attention to my letters to them, wherein I have endeavoured to shew, how, in my time, they have been deprived of their rights; their *customs*, their *law*, that protected them from want; and, how, in short, they have become a prey to the new race of oppressors. I have been induced to do this from the great changes that I see, after an absence of many years from my native country. I find so many of my acquaintances that I left in happy circumstances, reduced to poverty. I have seen the old and decrepid, and those whom want hath made sick, passing in dung-carts to the district work-house, from whence their bodies soon return, to the place, where the weary rest. And all that knew them have said "thank God! they are gone! and are no longer subject to the cruel law. To that law that makes us tremble when we think of the possibility of ourselves or our children becoming victims to it." Yes, so frightful is it, that it makes many thankful to see the last of their own children, forget their natural regard for each other, and think of nothing but self preservation. Where is now that kindred affection that was once the peculiar characteristic of this nation? We see families broken up, and scattered all over the world: we see parents separated from their children, as they know, for ever, with less concern, than, years back, they would have parted for a few days journey. The cattle in the field on separation, shew more regret. We used to acknowledge kindred to the third and fourth generation; but, now, brothers, once parted, must be upon

a level in circumstances, or they will seldom get together again. We seem like people upon a wreck. Every one of us having enough to do to take care of ourselves. To what is all this owing? It certainly used not to be so, and is, therefore, a subject, of all others, that deserves your Lordship's most serious consideration.

I am, My Lords,

Your most obedient Servant,

THOMAS BROTHERS.

April 24th, 1842.

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## LETTER VI.

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"The sure consequences of a paper currency would be a debt so enormous, that it would never be removed. The old debts and the new would vanish together, and the funded property would sink with them. A revolution in property might produce a revolution in Government, and all those scenes of blood which had disgraced France."—MR. NICHOLLS. Debates, 27th March, 1797. On the Bank Restriction Bill.

"If you *reduce the national debt*, we may laugh and sing at home, and bid defiance to all the world; *if you do not reduce it*, the consequence will be, that, instead of paying the national creditor 120 *quartern loaves*, for a year's interest of his £100, you will go on, till you only pay him 2 or 3 *quartern loaves*. Depend upon it that this will be the fate of the national creditor."—MR. HORNE TOOKE's speech, in the House of Commons, 2nd of March, 1801.

"It is not altogether improbable, that, when the nation becomes heartily sick of its Debts, and is cruelly oppressed by them, some daring projector may arise with *visionary schemes for their discharge*; and, as public credit will begin, by that time, to be a little frail, the least touch will destroy it, and in this manner it will *die of the doctor*. But, it is more probable, that a breach of national faith will be the necessary effect of wars, defeats, misfortunes, and public calamities, or even, perhaps, of victories and conquests."—HUME, on Public Credit.

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MY LORDS,—I think no more need be said to show that it behoves us all, for our own safety, to consider what is best to be

done. No man that deserves to be called honest or humane can be otherwise than deeply interested in these matters. If any of us believe that we know of any thing that would save us from being goaded on to still greater trouble than we are now in, we ought to make that thing known. And, if it should be found to be reasonable and practicable, it should receive the attention of those who are sincere in desiring a better state of things. Confident I am that it is for the interest of *no man*, not even for the *usurer himself*, to further pursue this course. If the furious and lashing elements should take charge of the vessel, she may strike the rugged shore, which is too prominent under her lee. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, but the simple pass on and are punished." "The wise man feareth and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth and is confident."

If I were as rich as the richest of your Lordships and could avoid the wreck by throwing one-half of those riches overboard would it not be a sensible act to do so? "Riches profit not in the day of wrath." What are all the riches in the world to a man if he dare not approach his own garden of flowers, lest danger should be concealed among them? To put an end to this state of things; I humbly propose, to the consideration of my countrymen, the following scheme.

FIRST.—Pay off the national debt.

SECOND.—Have a bill of rights, securing the people from public debts, in future; and from any thing as money, except the King's coin, gold and silver, of proper weight and fineness.

THIRD.—Suffrage to all men at, and above, 35 years, of age, provided they are house-dwellers.

FOURTH.—No member to sit in Parliament under 35 years of age; and then subject to no property qualifications. For, if a man can, *with such suffrage*, successfully contend *against property*, he must be a man well known; much beloved, by his countrymen; and well qualified for a seat in the honourable house.

FIFTH.—No Lord to take his seat as a legislator until he is 35 years of age.

SIXTH.—No Bishop, or Clerical person, to take part in legislation.

If it be possible to rectify the errors, into which this country has fallen, it must be done by some such a parliament as this that I propose.

As to the debt, some men say, “*why should we pay the debt*, when we know that the money, said to have been lent us, was, in fact, *not money*; but, was *bank notes*, invented on purpose to fasten upon us, a herd of fund-holders; many knowing this, at the time the principal part of the debt was funded, and did their best to prevent the fraud.” To all this I readily agree; and I know that many who held up their hats and shouted for “Abraham Newland” knew not what they did; many were thoughtless: many confiding; and, most of them might plead reasonable excuses from paying any part of the debt. But, it would be impossible, now, to make any correct exceptions, and the better way would be to charge the wicked scheme to the fault of the whole nation; and to make every particle of the property, belonging to individuals; as well as that belonging to the crown, and to the church, answerable for the same. No man, however, could be expected to agree to such a measure, without it be accompanied with the security named in *proposition the second*. *To wit*. That no debt shall be ever again contracted in the name of the nation, or people.

If this be not done the moment it is paid a similar scheme will be commenced again. And, this puts me in mind of an address, I read a few years back, from a candidate for parliament, to his supporters, in Sheffield. He regretted exceedingly that the debt had been contracted; “for,” said he, “if we had but been free from debt, we could have had the contracting of one.” This clause, then, must be secured before the well meaning part of the people could be expected to agree to anything of the kind.



To talk of England ever being in a situation wherein it would be necessary to *borrow money*, is to talk nonsense. If the rest of the world were in arms against her, she would be able, if *fairly untrammelled from the loan-mongers*, to repel them all. The people, in that case, would, willingly, bear taxation ; and, in defence of their country, would, on all occasions, eagerly resort to arms ; but who, that have sense in their heads, or feeling in their hearts, can willingly fight to uphold an horrid contrivance for pampering the most useless, and starving the most useful of men ?

A nation, though ever so weak and powerless, injures herself, and adds to her weakness by running in debt ; and, perhaps, no case, of the kind, can be pointed out, wherein it would not have been better to have surrendered to the enemy, rather than to have sought protection in the arms of the usurers. “ England,” as Napoleon said, “ has played for all or nothing ; she has gained all—performed wonders—yet has nothing ; and her people are starving, and worse off than they were amid the war. While France, who has lost every thing, is doing well, and the wants of her people are abundantly supplied.” No enemies on the earth are half so much to be dreaded as the loan-mongers, they live by wars and wretchedness ; and whenever I hear of a Nation, County, City, Town, or Township, borrowing of money, under *whatever pretence*, I make myself assured that there is roguery (though it may not be visible) at the bottom of the scheme.

Well, now to the practicability of paying more than eight hundred millions of pounds!!!!

A gentleman, who has considered this matter, assures me that fifteen per cent. taken from the debt, and from every species of property belonging to Great Britain and her subjects, that could be got at, would be sufficient to effect this desirable object ; and to test the scheme, he is willing to pay his own share, although he has been absent from England more than twenty years, and never expects to reside in it again : and although he was one of those who always protested against the contracting of the debt. His

property is very considerable, and his share, at 15 per cent. would amount to forty or fifty thousand dollars. Of course, a mere drop in the bucket towards performing the object proposed; but, still, a large sum for a man to give who has no interest in the thing, further, than to gratify his desire to see his native country once more in a safe and happy condition. But as to the amount being fifteen, or fifty per cent, signifies nothing. The greater the amount, the greater the necessity of discharging it.

I do not, *altogether*, agree with this gentleman, for, I think *the extreme of rational liberality* would not acknowledge more than half the debt: which, being **FIRST STRUCK OFF**, I would, in other respects follow out his plan. Mr. Cobbett recommended the striking off, at once, of half the debt; and, follows up the other half in a much more rigid manner than does this proposal.

I will here repeat, after abridging as much as possible, what he has said, on this subject; it may, as the crisis approaches, be of infinite use to his numerous admirers as well as do good in refreshing your Lordships' memories as to the opinions of that great man; of that man who truly loved his country, and died a martyr in defending her against the Jews and extortionate usurers.

#### AN EXTRACT FROM COBBETT'S PLAN FOR ADJUSTING THE AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRY.

"**SECOND PROPOSITION.**—To take all the public property, namely: the crown lands, the crown estates, the woods and forests, the Duchies of Cornwall and of Lancaster, the *real* property now possessed by the Bishops, Deans, and Chapters; and to enforce the rigid payment and collection of all arrears due to the public from *defaulters*; and in case of their being dead, pursue their heirs and assigns rigidly, according to the letter of the well known and most admirable '*Statute of Public Accountants*,' passed in the reign of **QUEEN ELIZABETH**, and still unrepealed; and to make the receivers of all unmerited pensions, sinecures, and grants, '*public accountants*,' and to pursue them and their heirs accordingly."

"**THIRD.**—To take the whole of what is called the National Debt, and, in the first place, reduce it to half in amount, we having, for many years, been paying twice as much interest as is due to the fund-holders, even supposing it to be a debt that we were bound to pay at all."

"FOURTH.—Then cease to pay interest upon a quarter part of this half at the end of six months, and so on, in order that interest might cease to be paid upon any part of it at the end of two years."

"FIFTH.—Then appoint a Board of Commissioners to receive and examine the claims of suffering fund-holders, and leave it to that board to make such compensation as might be found consistent with justice to the nation and humanity to the parties out of the proceeds of the property mentioned before."

The substance, in part, of Mr. Cobbett's incontrovertable arguments in defending these propositions are as follows:—

"The reform is of no use unless it lead to a reduction of taxes. To reduce the taxes then is to break national faith; for how can it be done except by ceasing to pay the interest of the debt? The debt causes the taxes, the distress, the discontent, the threatened commotion, and the army to check that commotion. To cry out, therefore, against a standing army; oppressive taxation; distress; suffering; and even starvation is to be stupidly unjust so long as you cry out for *national faith*. My proposition is just and no robbery. Solon found Athens in a state of utter confusion and destitution, unable to make war. The people, generally, were ground down to beggary and ruin by the *usurers*, who had made them actual slaves. Rome was in a similar state, from the same cause, in Julius Cæsar's time. Both of those men freed the people from the claws of the *usurers*, by making them, in some cases, take part, and in other cases relinquishing the whole. The King of France, and others have done much the same thing. And the Americans never paid a cent of the money they borrowed to effect their revolution, principal, or interest. No! it would have been a jest indeed, to have made a revolution in the name of liberty, and, to have ended it by making the people slaves to the *usurers*. Sir James Graham's proposition, (made when he belonged to the King's council,) is to deduct 30 per cent. from the interest. By what principal, I ask except, that which would apply to the taking off the whole? Sir H. Parnell, and all the Scotch tribe of political economists, who propose Joint Stock Banking, and to make paper money a legal tender, to make prices higher by means of this paper, that is, to lower the value of money, and thereby to rob the fund-holders. For if less is paid, how is the burden of taxes to be made lighter? No difference between our propositions then, except, that mine is sincere and honest. Theirs, thievish and roguish.

"I deny the debt, and do not propose to give the pretended creditors any thing, because, I consider it due to them. But, having property, that is of no use to the nation, and knowing that some of them would be destitute. On that account I make my proposition to give them such property. It was not the nation that borrowed the money. But, grant that it was, what right had your fathers to load you with debt, and leave you nothing to pay it with? It was borrowed to carry on

unjust wars, to prevent the overthrow of the borough-mongering system in England. If there existed no right, then, in the borrowers to make the loan, what right can there be in the lenders to demand payment? The lender knew, at that time, the purposes for which it was borrowed, and also the nature of the security. The law will not allow children to be answerable for their father's debts, nor, even for their own, until they are 21 years of age: because, it is supposed they are incapable to give their assent. Yet the blaspheming Jew, who lent the money, tells the people now they have got the power of legislating for themselves, that, they are bound in conscience to pay back the money, that he lent for the purpose of keeping them down. But one might ask where the ladies and gentlemen got the money to lend? It being more lbs. of gold, and silver, than ever came out of the mines, and is more than the kingdom, lands, houses, mines, and woods, would sell for, even if there were money enough in the world to buy the same. There must be some great mistake then, for it is physically impossible that they can have lent the money. No, the fact is, that it is a juggle from beginning to end. A maker of loans never lends any money at all. He writes his name on bits of paper, which he has distributed in sales to under loan-mongers; these have been turned into other bits of paper, and these bits of paper the government have paid away. It was the custom with Pitt to give the literary partisans of the government, what they called '*slices*' of a loan; for instance, *Moses* was the loan-monger; and, as the *scrip*, was directly at a *premium*, a bargain was always made, that he should admit certain favourites to have certain portions, of *scrip*, at the same price that he gave for it. I was offered such portion of *scrip*, which, as I was told, would put a hundred pounds, or two, into my pocket at once. I was frightened at the responsibility for the immense sum upon which this was to be a profit. But, I found that the *scrip* was never even to be shewn to me, and that I had only to pocket the premium. I positively refused the offer, for which I got heartily laughed at. But, my eyes were opened with regard to *scrip*, the stock, and every thing belonging to it; and I soon found that the system was what the *accursed thing* was in the camp of the Israelites, and that the nation could never be happy again, until it was got rid of. Now, if I had pocketed the money it must have come out of the *skill*, the estates, and the labour of the people, and I should have been a robber indeed, and more worthy of the gallows, than the forger of bank notes, or the stealer of sheep: and would it not have been right to pay me with a halter instead of paying me with money? But, if we were to allow, that, these bits of paper were money, it was worth only 14s. of the present money; as agreed upon in the House of Commons, in 1819. So that we have been paying interest upon a pound, instead of 14s.

"It is common talk with the loan-mongers, that, they have a mortgage upon all the lands and houses, and other real property in the kingdom. Let them then produce the deed and the bond. They can do no such thing—they have no deed, no bond, and they have no mortgage upon any thing. The government contracts a

loan, and passes an act of Parliament to provide for the interest, out of the *Consolidated Fund*. Now what is this fund ? The ladies think it is a monstrous heap of gold and silver ; no it is the taxes, that the ministers are able, annually, to squeeze out of us, and if they cannot get enough, which is frequently the case, the banks make more notes, and lend them to the government to make up the deficiency, and charge us with the interest.

“ When the bank, in 1797, stopped paying in gold, it was said to be a robbery of the fund-holders. Because it put forth a depreciated, and compulsory, paper, instead of the King’s coin. But the answer was that it was a case of necessity, and, Sir John Mitford, the, then, Solicitor-general rose, and, as a lawyer said, that there was no wrong done to the fund-holders. That he lent his money with the knowledge of the risk that he run. That he received an interest *proportioned to the Risk*. That the nation was not bound to secure him against all risk. That many claims were *prior* to the fund-holders. There was no answer to this argument then, and, who can find one now ? But, if we cannot withhold the interest without breaking *national faith*, how can we diminish the security for paying it ? And is not the security diminished by a repeal of taxes ? And, if taxes are not taken off, what is the use of reform ? And, if they are taken off, what becomes of the security of the debt or interest ?

“ Some years ago Alexander Baring, the great loan-monger, said, that *the nation was bound to pay, as long as it had any thing to pay with* ; and insisted that, like the bankrupt, it was under an obligation to surrender all it had. The bankrupt is bound to surrender all the worldly goods that he has then in his possession ; but the bankrupt himself has been the borrower, or has become the debtor, it is for his own use, that he has contracted the debt, and not for the use of his successors.’ He surrenders his all, but he does not extend the surrender to his children. But these inexorable creditors of ours would make us, and even the children in the cradle, slaves to them, and would leave us none of the means of providing, either for the safety, or for the upholding of the honour of our country.”

Thus says Mr. Cobbett. And I perfectly agree with him, except, that I think private property should also be made available for discharging this debt. And, that all should *suffer*, except the labouring man, who had no hand in contracting it ; not even knowing how or when it was done, but who has, heretofore, been made to pay the whole of the interest, which has been shifted from one to the other, till it came to him, where it remains and *ever must remain* until some such a plan, as I now propose, be adopted.

All other legislative questions will soon give way to this. To

talk of national relief from the "*corn bill*," (repealed or not). "*The ten hour bill*," *reviving trade*, by means of the proposed tariff, *abolishing this*, or, *establishing that*, is to talk of absurdities that cannot much longer satisfy the distracted nation, groaning under this intolerable weight. Where is there a man that is truly desirous to amend the condition of this country, and that, for such purpose, logically pursues some favourite plan, *apart from the debt*, that is not, by the grim monster, haunted at every turn, and terrified into despair?

My method of settlement would, in part, bring to the performance of a contract, the "*last acre*" and "*last guinea men*"; or their heirs and assigns; among whom are many of your Lordships, who are too honourable, I trust, to wish altogether to avoid a promise, either of your own, or of your father's, who, when that promise was made, took a prominent, and, perhaps an over-ruling part in the government; and you succeeded them, without protesting against their acts, which renders your case, as relates to the debt, very different from that of those who neither had themselves, nor had their fathers, any hand directly, or indirectly, in the affairs of the nation. I used to think the Jews ought not to be paid at all, and I think so still, but, on further reflection, I think the real property holders should not be suffered to escape; because, they, for the most part, *urged the contracting of the debt*, and voluntarily promised to part with their "*last acre of land*," and their "*last guinea*," for the payment thereof. *Suffering* is, therefore, necessary to make them remember, and to make future generations take care what contracts they make in the name of their country. As to the fundholders, if they should object to a settlement of this kind, all the harm I should wish them, for such an objection, is, that they should be *promptly* dealt with in a *more just and equitable manner*. But, if they know their own interest, they will be the first to agree to this *proposition*, and will, particularly, mark the new application of the word "*repudiate*" to which there seems to be, now, attached a sort of charm, that

travels in the wind, and meets with a hearty welcome wherever it goes. It commenced operation in the South Western States of North America, and its course, appears to be, East, and East by North ; so that, in all probability, it will arrive here before it be long.

A great deal, I know, will be said about widows and orphans, as if there were no widows and orphans except those of fund-holders. Every man ought, first, to think of his own family : and next of the widows and orphans of the poor working men, who, till lately, had the best of all good titles to a living out of the land ; they have, however, been choused out of the last mouthful of bread, and not a word is said in their behalf. But, where is there a man that need go any further than to his own family, or acquaintance, to look for cases as hard as would be that of the fund-holders if they were to get nothing at all ? Why then are we not to have a *little pity* for each other, as well as for them ? If we hesitate a moment about giving two-thirds of our labour to them, and such like useless persons, then, there is an outcry about *widows* and *orphans* ; who are drawn out, in the front rank, in the most imposing manner : used as shields ; and, when done with, thrown aside, and cared less about, by those that use them, than they are by any other men that live. Does not every man's widow and orphans deserve our attention as much as these ? Ay, and, most of them, a thousand times more, if humanity is, as it ought to be, our guide. Let us suppose a poor widow and her children gathering in their little crop, that, with continual care and toil, they have brought to perfection. There come to them half a dozen orphans, that, as far as size and strength goes, are much more able to work than she and her children. They, in the name of *national creditors*, demand two-thirds of the crop. Her boys, looking upon the thing as it really is, and, having English blood in their veins, begin to roll up their sleeves ; but the mother having been schooled in the matter, and having been bred up in such *nice notions* of *honour* and *honesty*,

would be expected to remonstrate with her boys, and to tell them, that, though they were half-starved *orphans* themselves, yet they must consider that the other boys were the orphans of men who lent, or who bought the right of those who did lend, bits of paper to the *nation*, and, for which, they, and their children, were entitled, for ever, to live on other's earnings, and that, therefore, her dear children must not think it an hardship to work, during their lives, one day for themselves, and two for the bankers, Jews, and usurious Gentiles.

But, we are told, that, if we *do not pay*, the *creditors* will not lend again. No fear of that, my Lords, while rags are so plentiful to make into paper; for, if the lenders were to get but a month's interest, in full of all demands, they would be well paid for the transaction. Such lenders, however, *not lending again* ought to be the best of all reasons why they should not be paid.

And even if we were to speak of *real property*, which is quite a different matter, yet, I would maintain that, there should, in cases of invasion, or, in any other case that regarded the safety and well being of the country, be no lending or borrowing. Every man ought to come forward with his property, to the last farthing, as well as with his mental, and physical strength. Receipts might be given to each individual for such property, or such services, and, should their joint energies be successful, and, on examination, after the victory, any cases appear to be harder than the rest, after allowing, *bountifully*, to those who had lost their husbands, their fathers, or brothers, in the conflict, and always considering life and limb of too great a value to be estimated with any other kind of property; After this, if any such cases seemed to want adjusting, why let them be adjusted. And if, on the other hand, a defeat should be their lot, then nothing of this kind would be necessary; for, we will not suppose it possible that the men of England would give up their country while there remained any thing worth quibbling about. There ought to be, *nay, there is*, no property, in time of war, that does not, if



needed, belong to the commonwealth. Can this be doubted, when we consider that men are taken from their wives, and children; from the plough, the loom, and the anvil, and forced to be soldiers? And while soldiers can be quartered on whom, and at what allowance, the government thinks proper? If these things can be done, why not take every thing else, that can give strength to the sinews of war? Surely, this would appear to be much more reasonable than for a chartered company to take from us, (against our consent) our land and houses. If a man can be impressed and transported to the remotest parts of the globe, to meet his country's enemies; or, to die of plague, pestilence, and famine, while his wife and children are exposed to stern laws, that, first, make them thieves, and then transport them. If these things can be done, surely, we can, *if needs be*, reach the property-holders *of all kinds*. I remember reading, years ago, a speech, made in the honourable house, by a very excellent member, Sir W. Meredith, on frequent executions, in which he mentions the case of one Mary Jones. Her husband was pressed; their goods seized, for some debts of his, and she, with two small children, turned into the streets a beggar.

"It is" said Sir William "a circumstance not to be forgotten, that she was under nineteen years of age, and most remarkably handsome. She went to a linen draper's shop, took some coarse linen off the counter, and slipped it under her cloak: the shopman saw her, and she laid it down, for this she was hanged. Her defence was, that 'she had lived in credit and wanted for nothing, till a press-gang came and stole her husband from her: but since then she had no bed to lie on; nothing to give her children to eat; and they were almost naked: and perhaps, she might have done something wrong, for she hardly knew what she did.' When brought to receive sentence, she behaved in such a frantic manner, as proved her mind to be in a distracted and desponding state; and the child was sucking at her breast when she set out for Tyburn." The parish officers testified to the truth of this story.

"It was no injury," said Sir Wm. "but for a mere attempt to clothe two naked children by unlawful means. Compare this with what the state did, and with what the law did. The state bereaved the women of her husband, and the children of a father, who was all their support: the law deprived the woman of her life, and the children of their remaining parent, exposing them to every danger, and merciless

treatment that destitute and helpless orphans suffer. Take all the circumstances together, I do not believe that a fouler murder was ever committed against law, than the murder of this woman by law."

This then is a sample of the hardships of the poor, in time of war; and one that took place during the contracting of the present debt, out of which have grown the locusts that are as destructive as were those of Egypt; to which, there was an end; but, to these, all seasons are alike, and no West wind has hitherto been mighty enough to take them away. The time, however, will assuredly come when the oppressed will find the remedy; and when they will not be made satisfied without better reasons than have yet been given, as to why, if to carry on wars such cruelty as that of this case of Mary Jones can be resorted to, why if this can be *lawfully* done, they should be obliged to crouch to the caterpillars or "capitalists," for their money to carry on wars. But, suppose we cannot force them to come forward and they stand laughing at us, while the besieging army is at our doors, will such enemies, if successful, look to those who have nothing for their booty, or to those who have every thing? Surely if the rich have no objection to foreign invaders there need be nothing to be apprehended by the rest. It seems to me, of all things, the most absurd to borrow part of their money to enable us to protect the other part. The cottagers, most of all men, love their country; but, they may be weaned from any anxiety about its fate, if they are to understand that the rich care nothing about it, except it be for the purpose of oppressing them.

What should we think of a noblemen, whose domain was besieged, and who refused to let the people, residing upon it, have, for its defence, every necessary thing; unless, for the use of *such things*, they, and their heirs, would agree to pay to him, and his heirs, *annual interest, for ever*? We know what his labourers would say: instinct, to say nothing of reason, would cause them to ask this question: "Shall we, (who have been, already, reduced to potatoes and water,) fight for the property and life of a

creature like this? Better, by far, that neither he nor his property existed, than, that, we should be *further taxed* for defending of them." Of such conduct this would be the natural result; and, there can be no difference, *when properly considered*, between this case, and that of the whole nation, in the same predicament.

Strange, indeed, as it must appear to every upright man, that the poor are to be impressed; ballotted, and otherwise forced to the battle field, and, instead of being met, on their return, by thanks, and rewards, they should be met by schemes for *taxing them and their children, till the end of time, for the benefit of those for whom they have been spilling their blood, losing their limbs, and risking their lives*. The money monster, (while all others are suffering,) sits at home, with his arms folded, and smiles at the prospect, of the future contribution, that he shall be enabled to levy, on account of those sufferings. Motives sufficient to induce beings like him, to be, as they are, ever on the watch for the sparks of discord, and ready to fan them into a flame.

THIRD PROPOSITION.—It will, perhaps, be asked why the suffrage should be fixed at such an advanced age? My reasons for this will be found in abundance in my work on the United States of America: in this place, however, I will briefly say why I think it would be attended with good.

The thirty-five years will take in the experienced of all classes; it is *equity itself*; and cannot, or, at least, ought not, to be objected to by any; for while it excludes the whistling, thoughtless, ploughman; it will, also, exclude the no less thoughtless of other classes; too many of whom, even of the highest, have been bred up, of late years, in profligacy, and, knowing, or seeming to know, little about any thing else. The young men of sense, of whatever class, will have no desire to take upon themselves the weighty affairs of government, so long as they believe those affairs are in better hands, and such belief will continue until *they distrust the wisdom and integrity of their own fathers*. There is a time for all things. Youth is a time for pleasure, and not for care and re-

sponsibility. It may be said; that, experience is often lost upon men, and it is true that this sometimes happens; but, experience is always effectual where any thing can be so; reason takes her seat in man at a late period of life.

“ At thirty man suspects himself a fool ;  
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plans.”

We rarely find a man of forty, that possesses any thing but a sensual, or untoward disposition, that is not wiser than he was at twenty; and, consequently, more fit to take part in matters upon which the fate of his country, his self, his wife, and his children depend. “ Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.” For instance, the present state of things, in the United States of America, could never have existed had the people, there, been governed by men of *thirty-five years old*; elected by householders of the *same age*. Instead of this, their laws have been made, for the most part, by boys; positively boys, in point of knowledge and experience, and the fruits of their folly, and ignorance are now too visible to escape the sight of those that are more than half-blind.

I have no doubt that, on reference to the speeches of English Statesmen, at the commencement of the American revolutionary war, age would be found to be on the side of reconciliation. Burke, speaking, on that occasion, of the young Lord Carmarthen, who was for war, flattered him, and told him that “ he was full of the fire of ingenuous youth, and that when he had modelled the ideas of his lively imagination by *experience* he would be an ornament to his country, in either house.” And let any man who doubts the good that would result by adopting this *proposition*, read the speeches, made at that time, by Chatham, Granby, Effingham, Manchester, Bunbury, Lowther, Powys, Saville, and others. Let him think of their warnings, and predictions, and he will see, that, had their advice been followed, much of the trouble, immorality, and wickedness, that is now existing, in both these countries, would have been prevented. I do not know the

age, at that time, of these wise lawgivers, but, from what they said, I am willing to rest, what I am here so desirous to maintain, on the fact of their being far advanced in life. Chatham, indeed, frequently spoke of his age, and remarked, that, youth is the season of credulity, and that confidence, so often mistaken, is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom. Of this we have an instance, in his own son, whose *confidence* and *credulity* caused him to be persuaded, by the loan-mongers, that nothing was so calculated to raise his country to lasting glory and renown, as the getting into debt. And he departed this life at about forty-five years of age; yet had found time to increase the debt from 257 to 650 millions!! And which is now so frightful that it will let no sensible man lie down on his pillow without being disturbed by its consequences; and without thinking of what must be done to get rid of it.

We see enough, too, of the consequences of being ruled by the counsel of *young men*, in the reign of Rehoboam. The people had been pretty severely handled in the previous reign, and they came to the new King, and said—

“Thy father made our yoke grievous: now, therefore, make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

“And King Rehoboam consulted with the old men that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, how do ye advise, that I may answer this people?

“And they speak unto him, saying, if thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and will serve them, and answer them, and speak good words unto them, then they will be thy servants for ever. But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him; and which stood before him.

These young men advised him to give to the people the following answer:—

“And now, whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.”

So when all Israel saw that the King hearkened not unto them, and that they had no portion in David, “they departed unto

their tents ;” that is, they departed in a rebellious manner ; and thus commenced division among them. It will be found that similar effects have resulted from the following of young and inexperienced counsellors from that day to this. And no nation ever felt the consequences of this indiscretion more than does this nation, at this time. It has been very easy to govern while contracting the debt. Boys might have done it, and boys, in part, have done it. But, now the settling day is near at hand, it is quite a different affair, and will require the greatest of wisdom to manage the thing at all. Our law makers must be men of altogether a different stamp, to those, by whose counsel we have been guided until the breakers are a head. There is no outlet ; and if we cannot put back we go to destruction.

Men, no doubt, take part in legislation when they are too old ; and, perhaps, it would be wise to consider them disqualified for holding a seat in Parliament, or filling any office under the government, at seventy years of age. By that time of life many are superannuated, both in body, and in mind ; and, those that are not so, can give no stronger evidence of the fact, than that, of their being desirous to quit the halls of factious and jarring debate, for the sweet repose and enjoyment of domestic life, often so far from the reach of those that are entrusted with the public concerns.

Holy writ, in the case of Rehoboam, bears me out in my first position ; from the same authority, I will take the case of his father, Solomon, to bear me out in this.—“ For it came to pass when Solomon was old that his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.” From this, I come to the conclusion, that, the wisdom, of which the governments of nations stand so much in need, is to be found in the men between the age of thirty-five, and seventy years. And, that an act may be passed for the securing of such wisdom is my sincere wish. If it originated in your Lordship’s house, so much the better ;

